

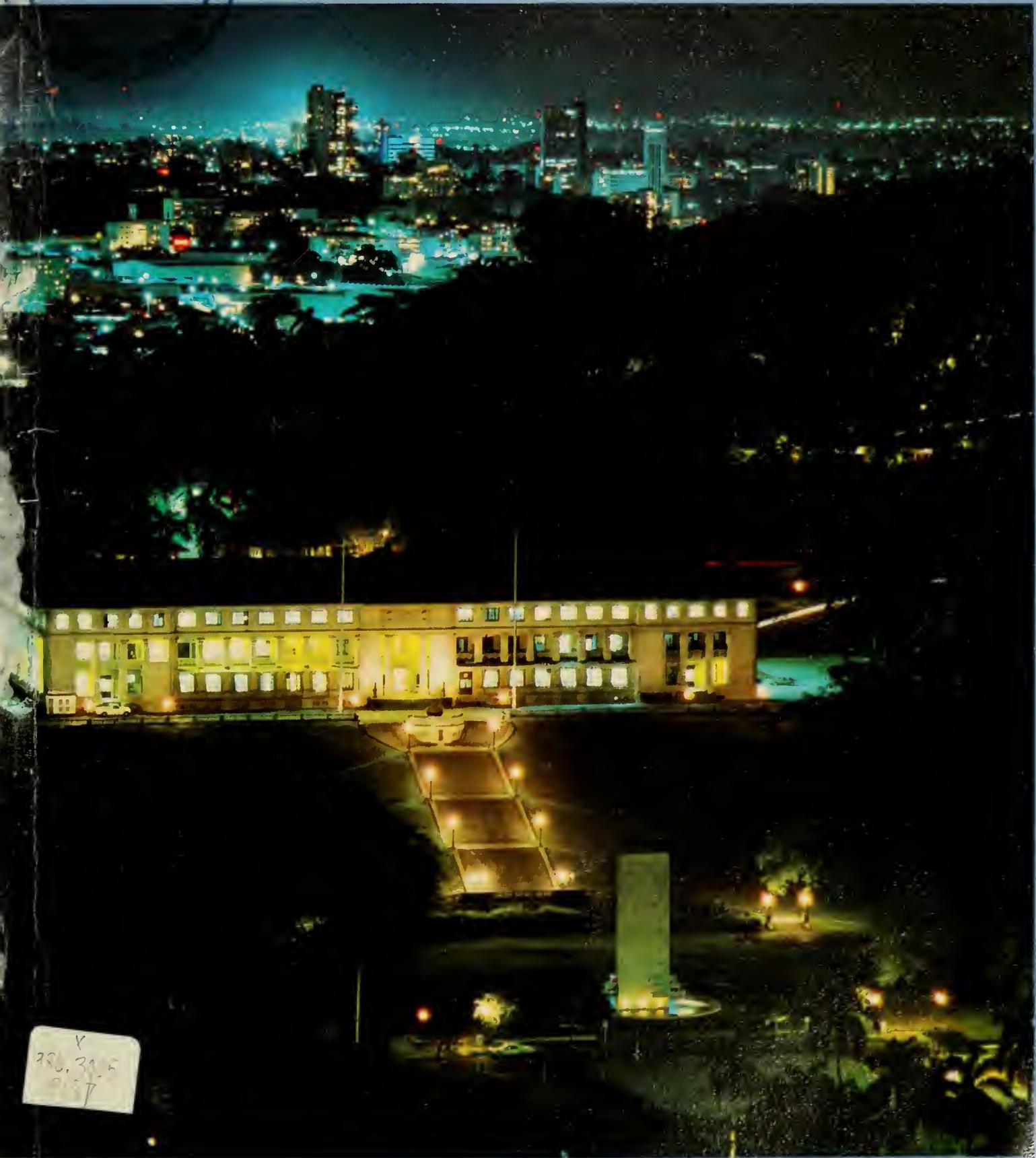
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PANAMA CANAL  
**REVIEW**  
OCTOBER 1, 1979



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## From The Governor of the Canal Zone

This year, the Panama Canal celebrated its 65th anniversary. Since the SS *Ancon* made the first official transit of the waterway, August 1, 1914, more than half a million ships have moved through the Canal transporting a wide variety of commodities to all parts of the world.

The Panama Canal treaties, which go into effect today, mark another significant milestone in the history of this important world utility. They mark the beginning of a new era bringing changes that challenge all associated with the waterway.

For Canal employees, the passing of jurisdiction over the Canal Zone to the Republic of Panama and the creation of the new and smaller Panama Canal Commission call for major adjustments in lives and livelihoods.

The Canal Zone has passed into history. It has been unique in American political history and a showcase of American organization. All who have worked and lived here can take pride in the standard of excellence set during construction days and maintained throughout the years.

We must now turn our attention to the future. Much has been done in that regard. The initial changes taking place have been anticipated and carefully planned to avoid any major disruption in the operation of the Canal. But the best of plans will fail without the enthusiastic efforts of those who must carry them out. In this regard I am confident that the keen sense of responsibility and devotion to duty which have prevailed will continue to be reflected in the efficient operation of this world utility.

To those who are leaving the Canal, I wish you Godspeed and good luck. For those who are staying on with the Commission, other U.S. Government agencies, or the Republic of Panama, the days ahead will demand the best that you have to offer in terms of continued commitment to your duties and willingness to adapt to new situations. Judging from the dedication you have shown during these last uncertain years, I know that you are equal to the task.

*A R Sanjiv*

*At left: A ship moves through Gatun Locks on a nighttime transit of the Panama Canal.*

*On pages 4 and 5: A view of the Pacific side of the Canal Zone as seen from Sosa Hill.*



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HAROLD R. PARFITT  
Governor-President

JAMES H. TORMEY  
Lieutenant Governor

VICTOR G. CANEL  
Acting Information Officer

THE PANAMA CANAL  
**REVIEW**

WILLIE K. FRIAR  
Editor

Writers  
FANNIE P. HERNANDEZ, DOLORES E. SUISMAN,  
VICKI M. BOATWRIGHT

Official Panama Canal Publication

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## In This Issue

**T**HIS EDITION OF THE REVIEW MARKS AN END AND A BEGINNING. It takes a nostalgic look at the past—at the buildings, the symbols, the living and working environment of the Canal Zone—and an optimistic view of the challenge of change facing the Canal organization.

Taking the place of both the summer and winter editions, this special edition of the REVIEW is being published to mark the day of the implementation of the new Panama Canal treaties.

The October 1 edition will be the last time the REVIEW will appear as an official publication of the Panama Canal Company/Government. With the formation of the Panama Canal Commission, it will become an official publication of that U.S. Government agency, which will be responsible for the operation of the Canal.

With the Summer 1980 edition will come the first major change in the REVIEW's logo since it began publication May 5, 1950. The retiring of the Canal Zone seal will leave a hole in our logo but for the next edition there will be a Panama Canal Commission seal to take its place.

Special thanks go to our guest writers who include Pandora Aleman, formerly an Information Office writer but now with Records Management Branch; Janet Len-Rios, free lance writer; Robert Burgess, retired Curator of Publications for the Mariners Museum in Newport News, Va., and Veterinarian Nathan B. Gale who collaborated on the wildlife story with Dolores Suisman, recently retired editor of the Spillway, the Canal's weekly newspaper. The new Spillway editor, Vicki M. Boatwright, assisted in the layout and design of this edition.

Photographers whose work is included in this edition are: Mel Kennedy, who designed the cover and served as art and photo director, Arthur L. Pollack, Don Goode, Kevin Jenkins, Alberto Acevedo, Gerry Laatz, and Bob Rogers, all of the Graphic Branch, and Vic Brown and Fred Robinson, of the Canal Zone Police, who provided most of the wildlife photos. Artwork is by Carlos Mendez of the Graphic Branch and Dante Fiori of the Division of Schools.

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## On The Cover

Lights from the many new highrise buildings of the Panama City skyline are a dramatic backdrop to the classic lines of the Canal's Administration Building in this night photograph by Mel Kennedy, who went to the top of Sosa Hill to get this view. Back in 1915, "Red" Hallen chose the same site for a night photograph of brand new building and the Prado. It appears on page 65. A comparison of the two photos makes clear the dramatic changes that have taken place over the past 64 years.

## Administration Building Unites Past, Present and Future



By Vicki M. Boatwright

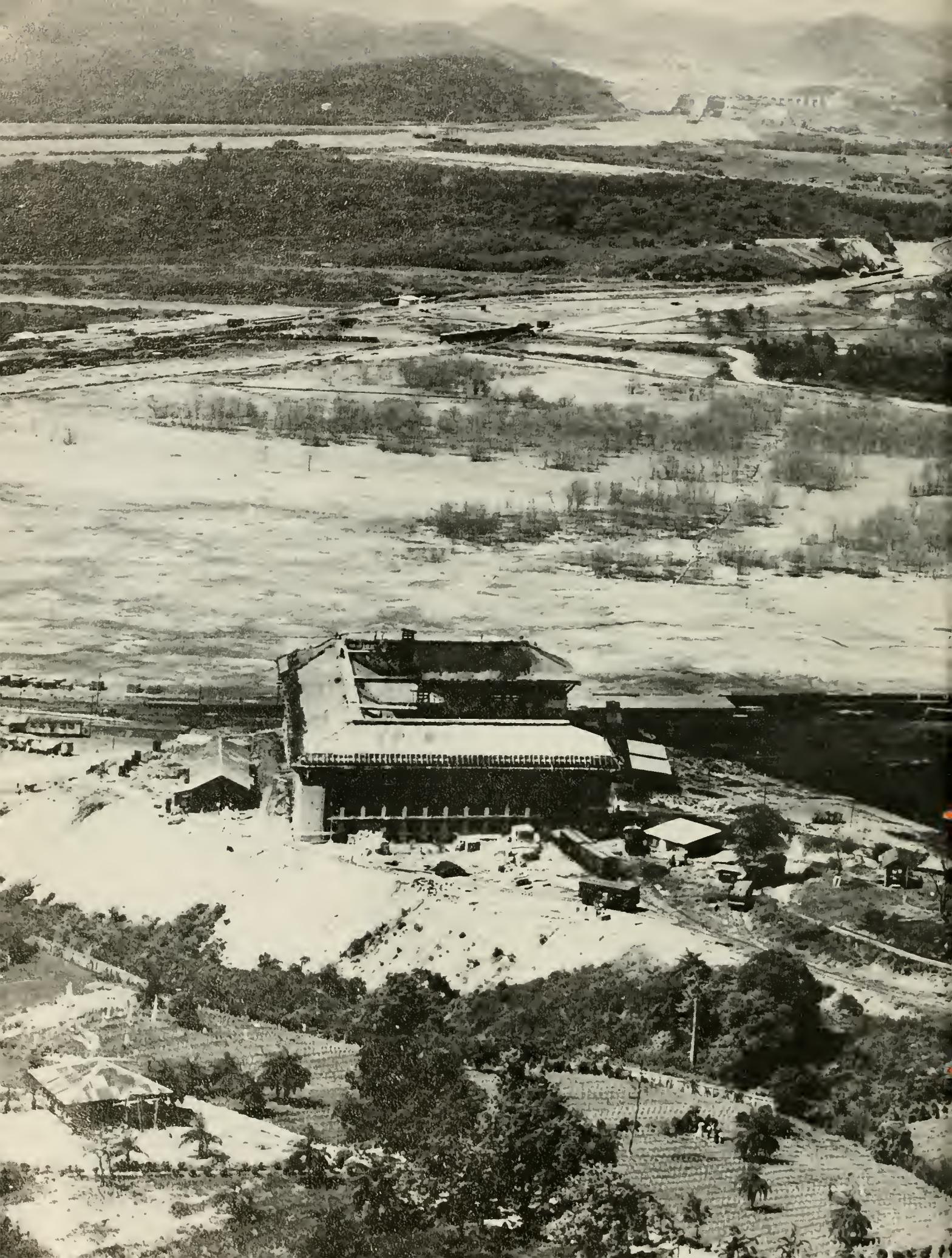
THE POWERFUL SCENES OF Canal construction that dominate the walls of the Rotunda of the Balboa Heights Administration Building hold employees and visitors alike in their thrall. For the murals depict in bold brushstrokes of pale ocher, bright orange and brick red the monumental labor that went into building the Canal. They tell us of what used to be. But the very quiet of the rotunda and the air-conditioned coolness distance us from the realities of construction days. They seem far away in time and space.

But face north in the rotunda and walk forward a few steps. All of a sudden the gap between past and present is bridged. In the central staircase, laid down in pink Tennessee marble in 1914, the steps are grooved from the treading of thousands of pairs of feet that have passed this way since the building was completed. As you take hold of the mahogany banister and begin to climb, you become part of that throng: hurrying to work on a breezy dry season morning in 1915; carrying blueprints up to Engineering in 1923; worrying about war news in 1942; or trudging back to work in 1957 after a 5¢ cup of coffee in the cafeteria. The steps, the banister, the building, all link us in an unbroken chain with those who walked this way before.

In 1912, about the same time that the finishing touches were being made to Gatun Locks and Gatun Lake was filling up, Chief Engineer George Goethals, who by this time was also Chairman of the Isthmian Canal Commission, turned his attention to the construction of a permanent building that would centralize the administration of the waterway. The engineering department had moved to Culebra in 1906, the disbursing and accounts offices were in Empire, and most of the offices concerned with material and supplies had been relocated at Cristobal.

Unaware, surely, that he would be the first Governor to occupy its executive office, Goethals named a

*The arched window at the third story landing of the central staircase is typical of Italian Renaissance architecture.*



high-powered committee boasting such notables as colonels Gorgas, Hodges and DeVol to find a suitable location on the Pacific side for a building that would be "well fitted to the purpose and character of an edifice which is to guard and direct the interests and operation of the Canal, overlooking . . . what will be the first permanent town of the Zone."

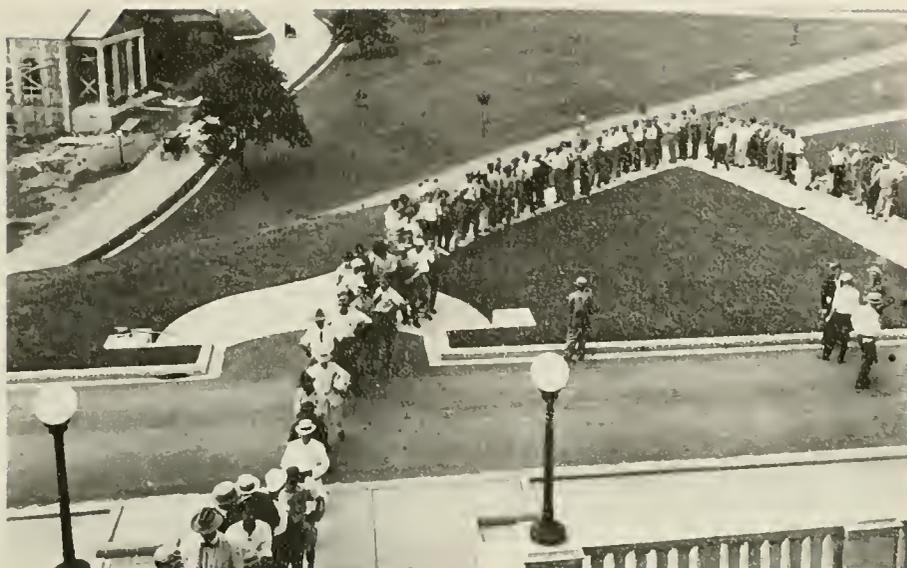
They considered five locations, four on or near Sosa Hill and one on a knoll of Ancon Hill west of the quarry that gave Quarry Heights its present name. When the committee decided on the latter site, which they described more precisely as "30 feet back of the former triangulation station on Lone Tree Hill," Goethals approved the choice with the stipulation that not a spoonful of earth was to be moved until a competent architect had gone over the ground.

Goethals' idea of a "competent architect" was Austin W. Lord, head of the department of architecture at Columbia University and a senior member of the firm of Lord, Hewlett and Tallant of New York. But theirs was to be a difficult association.

Lord spent the month of July 1912 on the Isthmus studying the topography of the land and local conditions that would affect the design of the buildings. The agreement was that he would return to New York to work out a general scheme in which all of the buildings "from Toro Point to Taboga Island would be of a prevailing style." He was to visit the Isthmus every couple of months during the construction period.

The arrangement never suited Goethals. The Chairman wanted the architect to leave his 5th Avenue offices and come to the Isthmus until the job was completed. Their correspondence reflected the basic conflict—the hard-driving Goethals sent curt memorandums demanding to know what the hold-up was and complaining of delays caused by having to do business by mail; Lord wrote long letters back, explaining that the Commission hadn't authorized him enough draftsmen, and more importantly, Canal officials had made no decisions as to how the offices would be layed out.

*The Canal Record* was later to comment, "The entire building was planned without any definite knowledge of what offices were to occupy it,



*At left, in January 1914 the exterior of the Administration Building neared completion, but Albrook Field was still a swamp and the Ancon Cemetery had yet to be moved to what is now Corozal to make way for new houses. Miraflores Locks is visible in the distance. Above: It's 1916 and a payday at the building, where employees line up at the pay windows located at the west wing to receive their wages in gold. Down the hill the First Baptist Church is under construction. Below: Males were still in the majority at the building in 1929, judging from this scene in the Record Bureau. The group seemed to be divided right down the middle on the bow tie versus the four-in-hand. The Record Bureau handled the Canal organization's general files and was situated on the second floor in the space now occupied by the Personnel Bureau.*



how much space they would require or how they would be correlated. . . ."

Goethals had been very firm on one issue, however. He informed the architect that the Administration Building was to cost, when completed, "\$375,000 and not one cent more, as we have no more and are going to ask for no more." No final costs are recorded in the detailed story on the

building that appeared in *The Canal Record* on December 30, 1914, but memoranda indicate that the final figures far exceeded the estimates. At \$25 per square foot, the rotunda's Van Ingen murals alone would run nearly \$25,000.

Lord's direct involvement with the Isthmian Canal Commission apparently terminated in 1913, but not

before he had developed the plans for the Administration Building, the layout and design for the Prado-type quarters and terminals buildings of the town of Balboa, and the plans for the hydro-electric station at Gatun, as well as the three locks control houses.

He had decided on the "E" shape for the building to keep it narrow enough to maximize the efficient use of natural light and because, had it run end to end in a line, the amount of floor space required would have made the building too long. The style he chose is Italian Renaissance.

With Lord out of the picture, his assistant at Culebra, Mario J. Schiavoni, was given the title of architect. With it came the responsibility of carrying out the plans of his predecessor and all the headaches associated with the undertaking.

Schiavoni had an artist's imagination, a quality not altogether appreciated by either Goethals or the resident engineer in charge of construction, Frank Holmes. With the latter, Schiavoni became engaged in a feud carried on by memorandum, centering mainly around the architect's tardiness in getting final drawings for the building completed. At one point, apparently fed up by Holmes' habit of sending a copy of every



*The overpowering beauty of the high, domed ceiling, the dramatic murals and the marble columns and floor make the rotunda the main attraction of the Administration Building. The murals, executed by artist W. B. Van Ingen at the request of Col. George W. Goethals, depict, below from left, the digging of Gaillard (Culebra) Cut at Gold Hill; the erection of a lock gate; the construction of Miraflores Locks; and the construction of the spillway at Gatun Dam.*



memorandum to Goethals, Schiavoni let fly this memo to Holmes: "I beg to state that I consider your attitude in making repeated written statements about my work very unco-operative and uncalled for."

Among the suggestions made by Schiavoni was that a decorative title panel in honor of the Canal builders be placed above the main entrance to the Administration Building. It would be sculpted to show an American construction worker flanked on either side by a Negro, a Spaniard, a Frenchman and a "Hindoo," with a steam shovel at one end of the panel and a dredge at the other.

The Chairman turned down the proposal with one sentence: "... I am of the opinion that all that will be necessary will be a plain inscription with letters, V-shaped inset, reading 'Administration Building, Panama Canal, 1914'."

The architect's recommendation that the Seal of the Canal Zone be laid in marble mosaic tile in the center of the rotunda floor met with a similar fate at the hands of Holmes, who declared it to be too costly and time consuming.

But despite personality clashes and delays for which each blamed the other, the construction work progressed steadily. Notwithstanding his caution about spending, Goethals applied the same imagination and foresight to the construction of the Administration Building that he had to the Canal itself. He brought Albert Pauley, the developer of a new process for making concrete tile blocks, to the Isthmus to oversee the erection of a plant to manufacture the blocks for all the permanent buildings in Balboa. Artist W. B. Van Ingen of New York, famous for his work in the

Library of Congress and the Philadelphia Mint, was hired to paint murals for the rotunda that would preserve in art form something of the monumental labor involved in building the Canal.

At Schiavoni's request, each week's progress on the Administration Building was recorded by Commission photographer Red Hallen, whose work on the Isthmus using bulky glass plate negatives was to later become invaluable in visualizing the history of the construction era.

On July 15, 1914, a little more than a year from the day the first steel beam was erected, the Administration Building had its first occupants. The timekeepers' offices at Culebra, Balboa and Cristobal were assigned one large room extending from the rotunda to the west end of the building on the first floor. All the heavy construction work had been completed at that point, but the 50 employees who were paid in gold and the complement of clerks and messengers who received their wages in silver moved in amidst the sawing, hammering, mortaring and painting that accompanied the laying of the pine flooring, the red tile in the corridors, and the mosaic tile in the rotunda, and the finishing up of the carpentry work and electrical wiring. No landscaping would be done until the following December, so outside the building the grounds were a gigantic mudhole. Temporary wooden steps led downhill to the Prado level, where by June of 1915, the houses had been completed and construction on Barnebey Street begun.

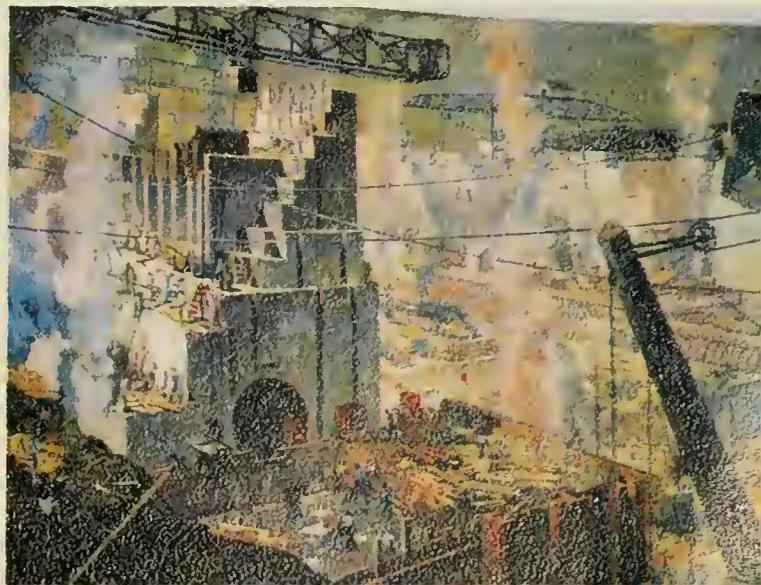
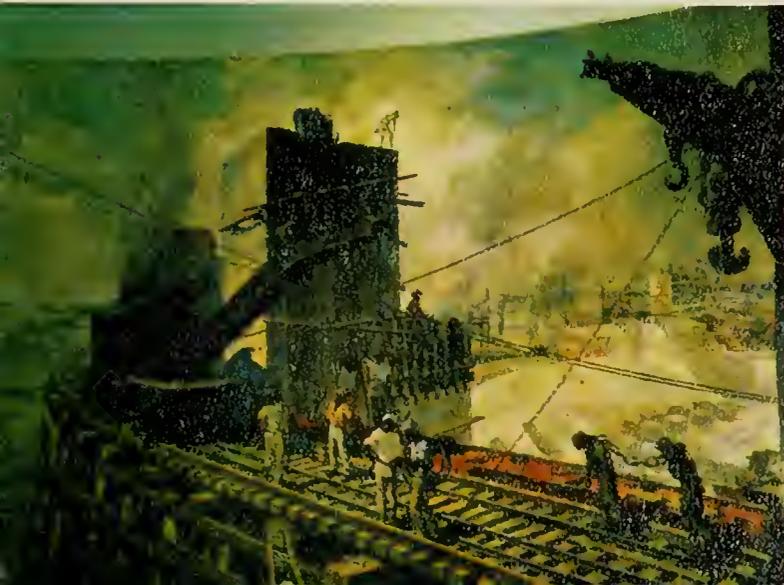
As with any construction project, not every detail had gone according to plan. The Administration Building's third and final architect, Samuel M. Hitt, wryly pointed out that fact in a

memorandum concerning payment due on the eight marble columns in the rotunda. Commenting that the columns were a first class job of marble work, he added that the supplier was not to blame for the fact that construction workers had set the top member of the column bases in upside down. Visitors to the rotunda today will notice that with the exception of one column, the outer edge of the round marble disc upon which each of the columns rest is ridged, indicating that side should be facing downward against the octagonal lower base.

Between July and September of 1914, the offices at Culebra, Empire and the administration building at Ancon were moved into the new building. By June of the following year, the building housed 424 employees, 49 of them women.

Both the location of offices and the daily routine of the employees that occupied them were, in most cases, quite different in 1914 from what they are today. In regard to the offices, only a few have remained in their original locations. When Governor Goethals, his Lieutenant Governor (formerly called the Engineer of Maintenance) and their secretaries moved into the second floor north front corner overlooking Balboa and the Canal, they set a precedent for the location of those offices that has continued to today.

The Chief Health Officer and Chief Quarantine Officer moved out of the old administration building at Ancon into the Health Department, on the second floor, which has since become the Health Bureau. Its offices have been enlarged, but like the Balboa Heights Post Office, the Health Bureau is where it has always been.





Office hours were from 8 to 12 a.m. and 2 to 5 p.m. the first two years after the building was opened, and most employees walked to work. Judging from a circular from Governor Goethals issued to all Administration Building employees, at least one temptation of office life has not changed at all. Goethals reproved employees for the practice of leaving work early at noon and in the afternoon "in order to secure an advantage in being served in the lunch room or securing seats on the motor buses."

While the opportunity to leave during the two-hour lunch break was obviously available, it would appear that many employees chose to stay in the building during the heat of the day.

Offices were locked during the noon hour; but with commissary coupons employees could buy a light lunch consisting of sandwiches, coffee, and pie from the basement restaurant that ran the length of what is now the Graphic Branch. Pool and billiard tables were set up in the basement for the men. The female contingent at the building must have complained about wanting equal consideration, for a



After winding his way up the spiral staircase located off the central stairway, Panama Canal photographer Kevin Jenkins examines the remains of a safelight in what was once the darkroom of the Canal's first Official Photographer. Below: The building's "E" shape is apparent in this aerial view.



short time later two rooms on the third floor now occupied by the Office of the General Counsel were set up as reading and sitting rooms for the women.

Employees could find plenty to read in the library located on the third floor in what is now the office of the director of the Engineering and Construction Bureau; but there was no room to sit down. *The Canal Record* reported that "The Canal library is so filled with reading matter as to leave little room for readers." Not long afterward, it was moved to the first floor area now occupied by the Press and Information offices.

Kathleen McGuigan, retired administrative assistant to the Comptroller of the Panama Canal Company, recalls that when she went to work at the building in 1934, the coffee break, now a mainstay of Administration Building life, was non-existent; but an employee could buy cigars and candy from a stand that had been in existence in the small room on the landing between the first and second floors since the building opened.

As a matter of fact, very little about the Administration Building's offices or routine had changed when the 20-year-old daughter of two Roosevelt

medal holders got her first job with the Canal as a clerk in the Claims Bureau, which took up the area now assigned to the Budget Branch.

The Paymaster's Office with its two large vaults occupied the end of the west wing that now belongs to the Office of Internal Security. When Miss McGuigan received her monthly pay receipt, she walked outside to the porch to cash it at one of the barred pay windows still visible today, just as her parents had done since 1914. Only back then, she remembers them saying, the payroll was delivered by horse-drawn wagon and their wages were paid in gold.

As a child, she remembers climbing the winding stairway to the photographer's studio located in the attic at the center of the building directly above the main staircase.

The photographer Hallen took her portrait using the north light coming through the paned skylight window that since has been covered over with the red tile of the roof.

Many years later the Graphic Branch was to find several thousand tiny glass plate negatives of employee identification photos stored in the wooden filing cabinets of what must have been Hallen's office under the

sloping eaves. To get to it he had to walk around the top of the rotunda dome, which rises out of the attic floor like something from the science fiction film "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." The Graphic Branch was able to distribute a few hundred of the negatives to relatives still living on the Isthmus.

Today the attic is a storage place for old engineering plans, bound volumes of Canal studies, civil defense supplies, and the bulky air-conditioning equipment that cools the building. But the peeling black paint on the walls of what was once a darkroom is a silent witness to its original use.

C. A. McIvaine, Executive Secretary under Governor Goethals, still held that position when Miss McGuigan came to work for the Company. To employees, she says, he was "like God." Governors came and went but C. A. McIvaine endured, carrying such broad responsibility as to make him, in effect, the working governor. His office was located in what is now the Governor's Board Room. The Correspondence Bureau, much later to become Administrative Services, took up the space on both sides of the hall that now belongs to the Office of the Executive Secretary.

Nearly all of the secretarial work for the Administration Building and a

great deal of the writing was handled by employees of that bureau.

Office supplies were kept in a stationary storeroom, Miss McGuigan recalls, just as they had always been. Government forms and writing paper, as well as the ubiquitous paperweight to anchor them against the dry season breezes that blew through open windows, were among the items requisitioned on a weekly basis.

The present Director of the Company's Office of Equal Opportunity Bruce Quinn, who grew up on Barnebey Street in Balboa, says his most vivid memory of the Administration Building is when as children he and his sister stood at the bottom of the stairs each afternoon, starched and pressed, waiting for their father to get off work. At closing time, Quinn recalls, great waves of people poured out of the building and down the broad expanse of stairs.

Indeed, the stairs played a significant role in community life at one time. On Memorial Day in years gone by wreaths were placed against the bronze plaque embedded in the base of the original flagstaff to honor the Canal's World War I dead. On the Fourth of July refreshment booths were set up on the concrete terrace around the building, and the stairs were alive with people watching the

marching band on the circle of grass below.

Today, only a few hardy souls come and go by way of the 113 stairs that architect Lord had so carefully designed to emphasize the majestic sweep from the building to the Prado, an effect now broken by the presence of the Goethals Memorial.

The years have brought many changes to the Administration Building. Offices have been moved from one floor to another and in some cases to other buildings. Windows have been blocked with concrete, and others have been created where no windows existed. Billiard tables and reading rooms are a thing of the past. Paychecks are cashed at the basement vault that once housed valuable records. The scars in the concrete retaining wall at the end of each wing of the building are all that remain of the hitching rings of the horse and buggy era.

Governor Parfitt will walk down the stairs one last time and the Office of the Governor will become the Office of the Administrator. But the grandfather clock there that dates back to the French canal effort will go on ticking away the passage of time. And the grooves in the pink Tennessee marble stairs will keep getting deeper, reminding us that past and present are one.

*Col. George W. Goethals was the first Governor of the Canal Zone to use this second-floor office overlooking the town of Balboa, and Maj. Gen. H. R. Parfitt is the last.*



THE GOVERNOR'S HOUSE, THE building most intimately linked with the construction days of the Panama Canal, will become the official residence of the Administrator of the Panama Canal Commission, with the departure of Governor Harold R. Parfitt, the last Canal Zone Governor.

The historic house, built as a residence for the Chief Engineer of the Isthmian Canal Commission, was located in the construction-day town of Culebra, overlooking what is now Gaillard Cut. Its first resident, John F. Stevens, canceled plans for an elaborate new residence for the chief engineer which was being built in Ancon because he wanted a simple house close to the work site. The building originally designed to be the official residence is now the District Court Building. It is featured in a story on page 24.

Lt. Col. George W. Goethals moved into the house in 1907 when he succeeded John F. Stevens as Chief Engineer. As Goethals was also chairman of the Isthmian Canal Commission House 159 became the quarters of the Canal Zone's chief executive.

It was in the house at Culebra that most of the official visitors, coming to see the Canal construction, were entertained and many expressed regret that the commodious house was to be dismantled and that the town, with its profusion of attractive tropical shrubbery, would be abandoned following the opening of the Canal.

The house and several other buildings were taken down in 1914, each section carefully numbered, and moved by flatcars to new locations at Balboa Heights. According to records, the Governor's House cost \$19,773 to build in 1906. It cost almost that much \$16,300, to move it from Culebra in 1914, and re-erect it at Balboa Heights.

Though a number of changes have been made during the tenure of each Governor, the house on the side of Ancon Hill, the official residence of Canal Zone Governors for more than 60 years, remains basically the same as when it was first constructed.

Col. Chester Harding, Governor from 1917 to 1921, had a porte cochere built at the front entrance over the circular driveway. During the administration of Col. Meriwether L.

## A Link With The Past

Walker, 1924-28, some general alterations were made, the main one being the doubling of the width of the side veranda. Most of the original equipment and furniture was replaced during the administration of Col. Harry Burgess, 1928-32. At this time, the Governor's House acquired its first official china and flat silver which bears the Canal Zone seal. It was in that era also that the Canal Zone seal was woven into table and bed linen.

Major changes were made in 1959 and 1960, under the supervision of Governor and Mrs. W. E. Potter, who in the interest of history and tradition, rejected plans for a completely new official residence. Instead, they retained the original style of the house, with its wide-sweeping verandas, high ceilings and large gracious rooms, characteristic of Canal construction days. Walls and foundations were reinforced, and wooden flooring was replaced with tile on the first floor. The stairway was relocated, a modern service section built in the basement, and a small bedroom, bath, and library on the first floor were converted into a comfortable air-conditioned guest suite. Whenever possible, materials, including the polished tiles on the first floor and the ornamental iron gates in the garden, were obtained in Panama.

The handsome Chippendale dining table, its 22 matching chairs, buffet, and two serving tables were made of native mahogany by the Maintenance Division to replace the set dating back to Goethals' day.

A fountain was added in the front of the house, a fish pond and fountain built on the patio, a retaining wall was constructed to terrace the gardens and considerable landscaping was done.

During Governor Walter P. Leber's term, the house was air-conditioned throughout. A breakfast porch, in keeping with the architecture of the house, was added in 1971 during Governor David S. Parker's term.

Items that enhance the historic atmosphere of the house continue to be added. A collection of oils and watercolors of the Canal and Panama,

painted in 1913 and 1914 by E. J. Read, that has been acquired by the Canal Zone Library-Museum, is displayed on loan in the house, along with oils by Alwyn Sprague, well-known Canal Zone artist. When the Tivoli Guest House closed, some of the furnishing, including one of the famous wicker rocking chairs, were transferred to the Governor's House.

Entertaining at the Governor's House includes formal dinners and luncheons for 10 to 60 guests and informal receptions, dinners, teas and coffees accommodating up to 200 or 300 guests using the spacious reception areas inside as well as the patio and garden. Because of sudden showers during the rainy season, from May to December, a large awning is placed over the main part of the patio.

The second floor of the house is for family living. It includes a large living room; two large bedrooms with baths; a study; a wing with a small bedroom and bath; and utility room. Most of the upstairs furniture is provided by the family occupying the house. Furniture in the downstairs area belongs to the house but each family adds a few additional personal pieces of furniture as well as some decorative objects.

Through the years, while it stood at Culebra and after it was moved to Balboa Heights, distinguished guests from many countries including presidents of the United States and Panama have visited this historic house.

Many on the long and impressive list of visitors who have been entertained at the house by Governor and Mrs. Parfitt since his appointment March 24, 1975, came to the Isthmus in connection with the negotiation and ratification of the Panama Canal treaties.

Included on the list, which reads like a "Who's Who" of well-known United States and international business, civic, and political leaders, is a large percentage of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives.

Having a deep appreciation for the history of the house, the Parfitts have made a special effort to invite Canal employees to come by for a visit and a tour of the public rooms and the garden. For their Christmas receptions, the invitation was extended to every member of the Canal workforce.



*The house as viewed from the garden and the veranda remain basically the same as in construction days except for the screens which were replaced with glass when the house was air-conditioned. Right below: Governor and Mrs. Parfitt take a walk in the garden.*



Below left: A painting showing the dredge "Cascadas" at work in the Canal is displayed just inside the front entrance. Below right: Some of the wicker furniture from the Tivoli Guest House and mola pillows add local color to a section of the porch.

## Historic Plaque Lists Governors

Engraved on the plaque, at left, which is on a wall in the house, is the following: "Moved from its original location in Culebra, a now abandoned construction town on the other side of the Canal, old 'No. 159' has housed Governors of the Canal Zone since that time. In one way or another, its occupants have left an imprint on the structure. There have been grounds changes and internal modifications. But the house remains basically the same as built for its first occupant, John F. Stevens, Chief Engineer, Isthmian Canal Commission in 1906."

Also engraved on the plaque are the names of the former occupants, which includes 16 Canal Zone governors: Gov. Harold R. Parfitt's name will be added at the end of his term of office. The Goethals family lived in the house, while it was at Culebra and after it was moved to Balboa Heights for a total of 10 years, far longer than any other family. There are seven living former governors. Past governors and their years of service are as follows:

George W. Goethals (1914-1917)	J. C. Mehaffey (1944-1948)
Chester Harding (1917-1921)	F. K. Newcomer (1948-1952)
Jay J. Morrow (1921-1924)	John S. Seybold (1952-1956)
M. L. Walker (1924-1928)	William E. Potter (1956-1960)
Harry Burgess (1928-1932)	W. A. Carter (1960-1962)
J. L. Schley (1932-1936)	Robert J. Fleming Jr. (1962-1967)
C. S. Ridley (1936-1940)	W. P. Leber (1967-1971)
Glen E. Edgerton (1940-1944)	David S. Parker (1971-1975)

*Although they never lived in the Governor's House, other Governors of the Canal Zone or officials who were commonly given the title of "Governor" during the construction period, May 4, 1904 to March 31, 1914, under the Isthmian Canal Commission were: General George W. Davis, Governor of the Canal Zone (Member of original Isthmian Canal Commission) May 14, 1904 to May 24, 1905; Charles E. Magaon, Governor of the Canal Zone (Head of Government and Sanitation) Member of Commission, May 25, 1905 to October 12, 1906; Richard R. Rogers, Governor of the Canal Zone (Head of Department of Law & Government) November 19, 1906 to March 31, 1907; Joseph C. S. Blackburn, Head of Department of Civil Administration (Member of Commission) April 1, 1907 to December 4, 1909; Maurice H. Thatcher, Head of Department of Civil Administration (Member of Commission) May 13, 1910 to August 8, 1913; Richard L. Metcalfe, Head of Department of Civil Administration (Member of Commission) August 9, 1913 to March 31, 1914.*





*On this page: The front entrance to the house; dining room, the table set with china imprinted with the Canal Zone seal; a small breakfast porch; the living room filled with fresh cut flowers; and a sitting room that is part of the guest suite.*





By Fannie P. Hernandez

**L**EAVING THE CIVIL AFFAIRS Building in Ancon, the 12-year-old boy smiles as he admires the photo on his brand new identification card. For the card, or "ID" as everyone calls it, is a sign that he is growing up, a Canal Zone rite of passage into the adult world.

His mother smiles, too, as she walks to the car with her son. She is remembering other happy occasions that were marked by a visit to this building. There was the thrill of her first driver's license at 17, her husband's hard earned ham radio operator's license years later, and the recent purchase of a plate for their new car.

Whether old timers or new arrivals, Canal Zone families sooner or later end up at the low white building off Gaillard Highway that bears a striking resemblance to an airport.

For the Canal Zone's old timers, the removal of the control tower and the addition of a neon sign spelling out "Drive Inn" on one wing and the "License Section" identified in big block letters on the other hasn't changed how they see the building. They still remember the busy activity of a commercial airport, which it was for several years, and the propeller driven planes taxiing down Albrook Field.

*Above: The Civil Affairs Building today. At left: Leaving the License Section, Herbie Raybourn shares the thrill of his first ID card with his mother Jacqueline. His father, Herb Raybourn, heads the Recreation Services Office located on the second floor of the building.*

The first commercial flights to the Isthmus landed at France Field on the Atlantic side, where Pan American Airways had a small wooden structure that served as its terminal. In 1940, when PAA established flights three times a week from Miami to the Canal Zone, operations were shifted to the Pacific side because France Field was inadequate for the new larger four-engine planes.

## *Civil Affairs Building Combines Business, Pleasure*

As commercial air traffic increased, it interfered with emergency wartime activities at the Albrook Air Field terminal, and it was decided that a terminal for all commercial service should be built.

Following the allocation of \$1,800,000 from the Emergency Fund of the President, the terminal was constructed, along with a hangar, small utility building and other appurtenances. The building and hangar were designed by a group of architects and engineers working under the direction of Lt. Col. Norman J. Riebe, of what was then called the Panama Engineer Division. The contract was awarded to Tucker McClure and Thompson-Markham Company and work was to be completed in 100 days.



When it was inaugurated on June 19, 1943, and turned over to the Governor of the Canal Zone for operation, it was one of the most beautiful, modern and fully equipped air terminals in this part of the world. The first plane to use the new terminal was a Panagra airliner southbound for Lima.

Reinforced concrete stucco on cement block and glass block was used in the construction of the two main floors, topped by a glass observation room and control tower. Its low flat construction exemplified a modern design of the early '40's and offered the least possible hazard to aircraft on landing and taking off. The exterior was painted olive drab to conform to wartime regulations.

A stained glass medallion was set in a window above the glass doors that opened by means of photo electric cells, believed to be the first in these parts. The medallion, designed by Colonel Riebe, combines a wing and propeller motif with the flags of the United States and Panama against a sheaf of flags of all nations of the Pan American Union.

Heavy wooden benches were centered in the spacious waiting room and main lobby that extended up through two floors. A monolith map of the Western Hemisphere with Panama at the center was inlaid in the terrazzo floor in front of the information desk. The map was to be the cause of a formal complaint by a South American ambassador who claimed that a border between his country and that of a neighbor was not correct. To avoid the possibility of other "border disputes" the narrow metal bars marking the borders were removed

and the map was reset in one solid color.

A unique feature of the building was the flat built-up tar and felt roof where water remained during the rainy season. The water was expected to provide added insulation and because its temperature was approximately 120 degrees, it was too hot to permit the breeding of mosquitoes.

Since the greater part of the construction was done after the United States entered the war, there were material shortages and priorities. Where original plans called for steel, it was necessary to substitute wood or iron. Local materials were used wherever possible. Stair railings were made of Central American mahogany, lockers were of wood instead of steel, and refrigerator shelves of mahogany. Terrazzo replaced marble on the facade.

After the war, as air travel became more popular and the terminal became a busy international link between North and South America, there was a constant stream of diplomats and other dignitaries, businessmen, tourists and movie personalities. Local teenagers flocked to the terminal when they heard of the arrival of Clark Gable, Tyrone Power, Cary Grant, Dolores Del Rio, Edward G. Robinson, Vincent Price and many other celebrities.

A rather "very important person" to pass this way was an Indian maharaja who an hour after his plane took off realized that he had left his coat behind in the terminal. The airliner returned for the coat. Another incident that caused quite a stir was a shoot-out in the terminal between a member of the Somoza family of Nicaragua and a political enemy.

When it was announced just a few years later, that a new international airport was to open in Panama and the commercial airlines would be moving their operations there, a number of requests and recommendations for the utilization of the terminal building were sent to the Governor. The Caribbean Air Command offered to transfer the Albroom grade school to the Panama Canal if it would relinquish claim to the air terminal and its facilities. As early as July 1945, a group of employees suggested that it be converted to a "modern and up-to-date club for the exclusive use of Canal and Railroad employees, with a first class restaurant, bar, dance floor, tennis courts and club rooms."

However, the Panama Canal urgently needed the space to house many of its activities that were scattered in temporary wooden buildings and to eliminate the congestion in the Administration Building.

When Tocumen Airport was opened in September 1949, the terminal was converted into office space for the Public Affairs Office, as Civil Affairs was then known. The Federal Aviation Administration maintained its offices there until 1962, when it moved to its present location.

*Above: A view of the newly opened Canal Zone Air Terminal, painted olive drab to conform with wartime regulations, shows the hangar and part of the airstrip. At far right, two canvas topped touring cars, taxis of the early 1940's wait for passengers.*

For the past 30 years, the building has been the seat of the Civil Affairs Bureau, the bureau of the Canal Zone Government responsible for public education, police and fire protection, postal, customs and licensing serv-

ices, other government functions, and home of the Canal Zone Library-Museum.

The Library was the first to transfer to its new location in the left wing of the second floor which included the

former mezzanine, moving in November 1949 from the first floor of the Administration Building. The Museum moved in late 1950 to what had been the first floor lobby and the area looking out on the airfield.

When the air terminal building was turned over to the Civil Affairs Bureau, it needed a new name. Among the suggestions were McIlvaine Building or McIlvaine Hall, in honor of C. A. McIlvaine, who was executive secretary of the Panama Canal from 1914 to 1940; Goethals Hall "with a bust of him in the concourse"; and Civil Functions Building. Canal Zone Governor F. K. Newcomer said he believed that Library Building was "adequate and appropriate," and that is what it was called until May 22, 1950, when it was officially designated the Civil Affairs Building.

That same year, the administrative offices of the Division of Schools moved from the Balboa Elementary School to occupy the right wing of the first floor.

The License office moved from the Police Station opposite the Balboa Elementary School to the area that had been the airmail dispatch section and bonded storage of Panama Customs.

The Police and Fire divisions, which until 1950 were one division, each established headquarters in the building in the mid '50's; the Fire Division took over an area in the left wing of the first floor that for a time had been used by a branch of the Postal Division for the sale of money orders and postal certificates; and the Police Division located in the second floor area formerly occupied by airline offices.

The Canal Zone Postal Service and its Philatelic Agency moved to the third floor observation room where employees have enjoyed a privileged view. From their desks, they could follow the top of ships transiting the Canal, passing trains, and aircraft landing and taking off at Albrook.

Since it was created in 1963, the Recreation Services Office has been located on the second floor, and when the Canal Protection Division became the fifth division of the Civil Affairs Bureau, it took over space in the right wing of the second floor. When Civil Defense was a part of the Civil Affairs Bureau, it too had an office there.

The control tower operation was



*Pan American Airways' 4-engine "fat-bellied" Boeing takes on fuel at the Canal Zone Air Terminal before taking off on the Canal Zone to Miami flight.*



*Bookshelves are lifted into more comfortable and commodious quarters on the second floor of the former air terminal where the Library moved in November 1949.*

moved to Tocumen Airport when the terminal closed. The former kitchen became a Drive-Inn in January 1950 and the coffee shop was later converted to a vending site.

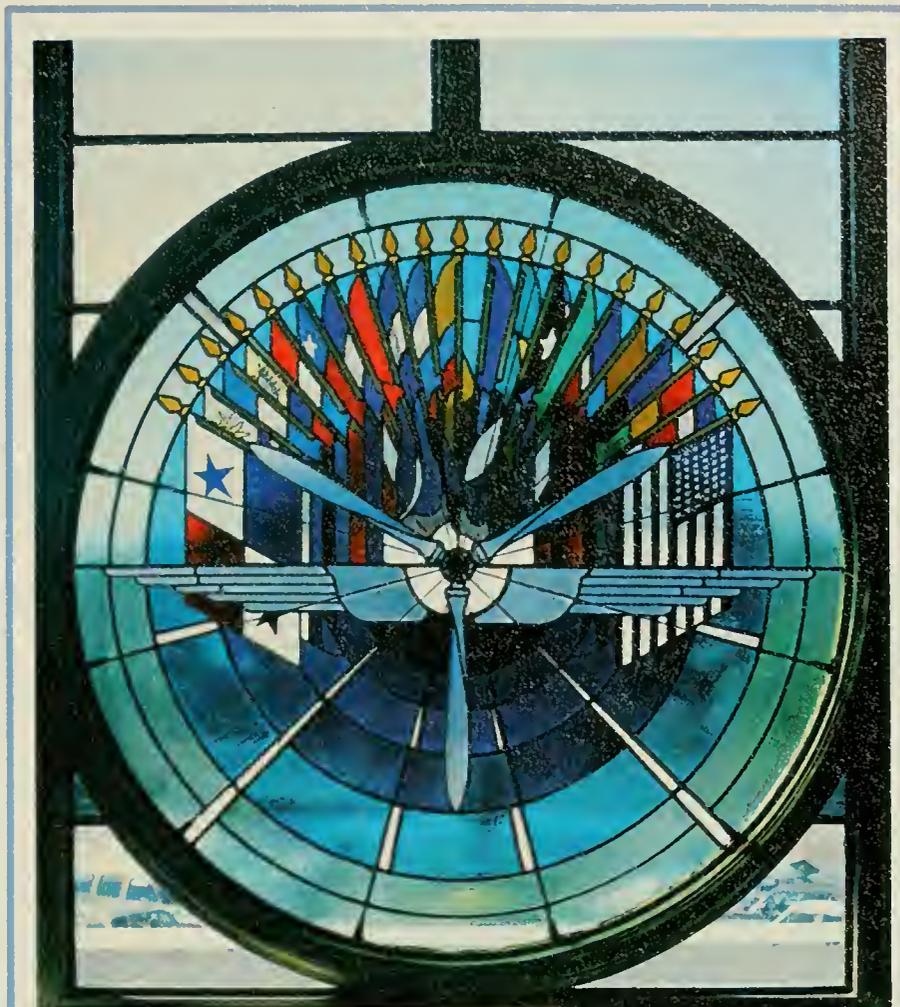
The electric door device was removed in 1952, perhaps because the doors opened inward into the building and Canal Zone fire regulations require that doors in public buildings open outward. The bar had been transferred earlier to the Hotel Washington.

Five directors have served as administrators of the Civil Affairs Bureau over a period of nearly 30 years. Col. Richardson Selee (retired) was named the first director when the first reorganization of the Panama Canal and Panama Railroad operating units was made in July 1950. When Selee left the Canal in October 1953, Henry L. Donovan was appointed to succeed him and served until his retirement in August 1961. Bernhard I. (Emo) Everson was the third Civil Affairs director and served until October 1973, when he retired. He was succeeded by Francis A. Castles who retired in February 1977 and Fred A. Cotton was appointed the fifth and last Civil Affairs director.

With the disappearance of the Canal Zone Government upon entry into force of the Panama Canal Treaty, title of the Civil Affairs Building has been transferred to the Republic of Panama.

The Treaty, however, provides for the Panama Canal Commission to use certain office space within the building during the period of transition for activities related to the management, operation or maintenance of the Panama Canal. The Treaty also allows the Commission to operate and maintain the public library-museum, enabling the library to offer full scope library services from the building.

In accordance with the Agreement, the Police, Fire and Canal Protection division headquarters will remain in the building from 12 to 14 months, until new headquarters are readied for them in the former Balboa Housewares Building. These divisions are sharing the building with Panama Government offices including Panama's main municipal traffic court and Panama's licensing and registrations offices.



*The stained glass medallion signifies that the building was once an airport.*



*Civil Affairs Building "old-timers" listen attentively as Library-Curator Beverly Williams (1951) tells her longtime coworkers the story of the oil painting of the Half Way House that hangs on the second floor. From left, Rhoda Fox (License Section, 1950), Peggy Zeimetz (Director's Office, 1953), Billy Hultin, Director's Office, 1961), Cecilia Vaz (Schools, 1951), and Doris Etchberger (Schools, 1949). "Old-timer" Katherine Melanson (License Section, 1951) was not present for the picture taking.*





## History of C.Z. Hospitals A Chronology of Change

By Janet Len-Rios

**T**HE FIRST CANAL-SUPPORT hospital on the Isthmus of Panama was L'Hospital Central du Panama built by the French Canal Company in 1882 at Ancon near the present site of the Logistics Building. The latest major hospital construction in the Canal Zone was the completion in 1977 of the pylons added to the Main Building of Gorgas Hospital to absorb the destructive forces of earthquakes.

The change from French to American administration brought a change in name to L'Hospital Central du Panama in 1905 when it was, by gubernatorial decree, renamed Ancon Hospital.

Canal Zone medical facilities have, since the beginning, been staffed by outstanding medical personnel who have become particularly well known in the field of tropical medicine. The hospital at Ancon has had its own laboratory since 1905.

With the close of the Canal construction period and the concomitant decrease in workforce to operational levels, many of the buildings in the sprawling complex at Ancon, by that time rather run-down anyway, were no longer needed; so a smaller, more modern and more centralized facility was planned. The "new" Ancon Hospital was completed in April of 1919.

In March of 1928, by Joint Resolu-

tion of Congress, Ancon Hospital was renamed in memory of Maj. Gen. William Crawford Gorgas, the first Chief Sanitary Officer of the Canal Zone, for his work in ridding the Isthmus of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, the vector of the dread yellow fever which had taken such a terrible toll in human suffering and death during the early Canal construction days.

The advent of World War II brought an urgent need for expanded medical services to facilities already taxed by an influx of personnel to work on the third locks project. Existing facilities were enlarged and hospitals were also built on the various military bases. Modernization has continued and the present Main Building of Gorgas Hospital was completed in 1965.

In recent years needs have again changed and medical services have been gradually consolidated at the two main hospitals—Gorgas on the Pacific and Coco Solo on the Atlantic.

Flexibility and change have been bywords for medical services in the Canal Zone. With this history, it should come as no surprise that yet another change is in store. On October 1, with the implementation of the treaty, jurisdiction over Canal Zone medical facilities will transfer to the United States Department of Defense.

*Aerial view of Gorgas Hospital on the Pacific side of the Isthmus and, at right, Coco Sala Hospital on the Atlantic side.*





**A**LTHOUGH ORIGINALLY considered the “permanent Administration Building,” this concrete block building at the foot of Ancon hill served that purpose less than a decade, before becoming headquarters of the U.S. District Court for the Canal Zone.

The rambling three-story landmark with a striking view of Panama was first intended as the permanent residence for the Canal Zone governor. The house, whose completed cost a report of the Isthmian Canal Commission estimated at around \$200,000, was to have had 15 bedrooms, each with its own bath, a roof garden and a 55 by 48 foot drawing room. Between 12 and 15 servants would have been necessary to keep it up.

In late 1906, before anything but its exterior was completed, Chief Engineer Stevens ordered that it be converted to an Administration Building, and by January of 1908 it was ready for I.C.C. officials to move in. The first occupants were the chiefs of the Civil Administration Department; the Division of Posts, Customs and Revenues; and the Secretary of the Commission.

By September of 1914, when the transfer to the “new” Administration Building at Balboa Heights was completed, only the offices of the Special Attorney, the legal department and a branch pay office

## *Court Comes To Order in The Ballroom*

remained. The following year the headquarters of the United States troops in the Canal Zone was temporarily located on the second floor.

Exactly when it was decided to convert the building to its present use is not clear. A memo to the Governor from the Constructing Quartermaster dated November 24, 1914, authorizing repairs and alterations costing \$29,000 bears

a handwritten note saying the lower floor was to be used as a District Court.

In December the Quartermaster recommended that the former Sanitary Office on the first floor be used as a courtroom and that the second and third floors be converted into high class bachelor quarters to “afford us some relief for the congestion which has existed for a long time at Ancon.” In July of 1915 he advised that no repairs be made until it was decided what was to be done with the building.

In any case extensive renovations were carried out and the offices of the U.S. District Court moved in February of 1916. The courtroom was the large room at the front of the building that had originally been intended as the ballroom of the Governor’s residence. The old District courthouse in the rear of the Ancon police station was turned over to the Christian Science organization.

Following implementation of the new Panama Canal treaty the U.S. District Court will continue to hold session in this building for a 30-month transition period.

## Canal Zone Seal Retired But Replicas Abound

By Pandora Gerard Aleman

**M**AJ. GEN. GEORGE W. DAVIS, first Governor of the Canal Zone, is said to have remarked in 1905 that the Seal of the Canal Zone would be a fixture on the Isthmus "for all time." His words have an ironic ring today, as the Canal Zone is erased from maps of the world and the seal itself is eased into retirement.

Representations of the seal have been a common sight on the Isthmus, displayed on arm patches of the Canal Zone Police, on some official cars, on a pillar outside the rotunda in the Administration Building, on the Governor's flag, on stationery, forms, and postage stamps, and even on "license plates" created by the Panama Canal Society of Florida to help identify to each other Canal retirees living in the United States. Hand-painted replicas have been presented to such distinguished visitors as Congressmen, the Panama Canal Board of Directors, the Industrial War College, and foreign diplomats.

Creation of the seal was, one might say, a gesture of faith in the Canal enterprise, for when it was conceived the Panama Canal was still a mosquito-ridden, rain-drenched dream (or nightmare!).

The Isthmian Canal Commission declared in 1904 that "the Executive Secretary . . . shall be the custodian of the seal of the Government of the Canal Zone, and shall attest such acts of the Governor as are required by law to be done and performed under said seal."

This has been the real job of the official seal, the embossing device whose home since 1906 has been the Executive Secretary's office: to authenticate official and legal documents, particularly those to be used in jurisdictions other than the Canal Zone. Together with the signature of

the Executive Secretary, the impression of the seal has attested the authenticity and validity of official acts.

Through the years, the Executive Secretary and his staff have had plenty of opportunity to flex their muscles in the exercise of this official function. The seal and signature have been affixed to as many as 5,000 documents a year, from parole and pardon documents to notary public commissions.

Having once decided to create a seal, the Commission cast about for an appropriate design. The origins of the seal are somewhat cloudy, but it appears that both Governor Davis and Gaillard Hunt, a former State Department official, had a hand in the design, and that some characteristics were inherited from the French canal builders.

In 1905, Governor Davis wrote: "The *motif* of my design was, first, to comply with the law—second, to give it an essential interoceanic canal character, for the United States has but one errand at Panama—to make a canal, to join the seas for the benefit of mankind—and I, therefore, adopted a motto expressive of that idea."

"Of course," he continued, "it is well known that M. DeLesseps adopted a motto for his [French Canal] Company, the idea of which was that the continents were divided for the benefit of mankind."

In 1905, "Messrs. Tiffany and Company," of New York City, submitted several designs for the seal to the Department of State and the Isthmian Canal Commission. On Mr. Hunt's recommendation, one was adopted the following year after the Commission chairman changed the original word "earth" to "land" and made the sails of the Spanish galleon smaller.

Tiffany's then made the outsized device for embossing the seal on official documents which has been hard at work for the past 63 years.

But the Tiffany color design for the seal, which is still on hand in the Administration Building, is in many ways markedly different from the one so familiar to us. It consists only of a shield with a ribbon below; there is no border. The Spanish galleon shown passing through the Canal in the lower part of the shield is brown and flies an orange-and-white flag. The banks of the Canal are brown, with green grass, and the water is blue, showing a yellow-gold reflection from the slightly



Replicas appear on Traci Cotton's track medal, plate and bronze plaque by Artist Alwyn Sprague; and on retail store items displayed by Viola Dixon, left, and Beverly Kinsey.

orange sky. Below is a light-blue ribbon bearing the motto "The Land Divided; The World United" in metallic-gold letters.

So the seal might have remained, if President Woodrow Wilson had not in 1915 issued an executive order establishing that the Governor of the Panama Canal should have a distinctive flag, bearing the seal, for use in his official capacity. His executive order gives the first officially published description of the seal:

"The seal consists of a shield, showing in base a Spanish galleon of the Fifteenth Century under full sail coming on between two high banks, all purple, the sky yellow with the glow of sunset; in the chief are the colors of the arms of the United States. Under the shield is the motto: 'The land divided; the world united!'"

There are obvious discrepancies between President Wilson's description and Tiffany's execution of the design. Hence, as the official Historical Description of the Seal of the

the version with the typographic error reads, "two high banks, all purpose." (Imagine the quandary of an artist confronted with the task of depicting "all purpose" banks!)

Finally, in 1956, it was decided to settle definitively the question of the proper color scheme. Employees of the Architectural Branch of the Engineering Division painted designs based on President Wilson's description. Of these, Acting Gov. Herman W. Schull Jr., selected illustrator Franklin Kwai Ben's rendition as the most faithful execution of the official description.

Searching for a bold, striking design worthy of the seal, Kwai Ben had done 20 different color schemes. But one remained his favorite throughout. It was a simplified scheme, with the ship's hull, the water, and the Canal banks all purple. He gave the seal a blue circular border bearing the words "Seal of the Canal Zone Isthmus of Panama" in golden-yellow letters. His favorite turned out to be Acting Governor Schull's as well.

Even though Kwai Ben's color scheme was adopted 23 years ago, and even though he for a time faithfully reproduced those colors when painting replicas for VIP gifts, still not every seal you see will conform to the official color scheme.

A limited number of epoxy reproductions of the seal were made from a press designed by the Army Map Service in Washington, D.C., and hand-painted on the Isthmus in 1969 for use as VIP gifts. It was one of these that found a place outside the rotunda. Since that time, other blanks have been painted by whoever could

be found with the time, energy, and skill to do it.

Although most have guided themselves by Kwai Ben's design, the careful eye will detect that each artist's inventiveness and, perhaps, the colors he happened to have on hand influenced his rendition.

One will see blue banks and blue water with white waves; sunsets ranging from dull orange-and-yellow to bright red; and flags of various colors unfurled atop the galleon's mast—in short, the range of variation that distinguishes the hand-painted artifact from the mass-produced.

If you're lucky enough to come into the possession of one of these reproductions, treasure it for the "original" it is.

From the time the seal was adopted, there have been hundreds of letters from collectors of official seals, asking for an impression, and from those who want to reproduce the seal—in books, on souvenirs, on handkerchiefs and shirts, in needlework. With the ratification of the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977, collectors intensified their efforts to corner the market on Canal Zone memorabilia—with special emphasis on any item, from molas to stamps, bearing a representation of the seal.

Such activity accompanies the passing of an era. The Seal of the Canal Zone is obsolete. One cannot but hope, though, that elements of the seal may be reborn in some new device to be adopted by the Panama Canal Commission, just as the dream symbolized by the seal lives on in the reality of an interoceanic Canal that parts the Americas and unites the world.



Dorothy Cogwell uses the Tiffany embossing device to affix the seal to an official document.

Canal Zone says, "for years, color reproductions of the seal proved troublesome with mistakes being made in the arrangement of the white and red colors in the bars of the chief and in various shadings."

To make matters worse, as the official description was reprinted over the years an error crept in (it was immortalized on the brass plaque below the seal outside the rotunda). Whereas President Wilson speaks of "two high banks, all purple" (*purple* being a heraldic term for *purple*),



## The 29-Year-Old Panama Canal Co. Seal Becomes A Part of History

The Seal of the Panama Canal Company was created following the reorganization of the Panama Canal and the Panama Railroad Company operating units in July 1950. Designed by the Engineering Division, the Seal depicts a lower locks chamber of the Canal with the bow of a ship of the Panama Line in the upper chamber behind a closed gate. Inscribed on the Seal is "The Panama Canal Company 1950." This Seal along with that of the Canal Zone Government becomes part of Panama Canal history following the establishment of the new U.S. Government Agency, the Panama Canal Commission, which will operate the waterway following implementation of the treaty.

# New Panama Canal Medal

## A Symbol of Change

The passing of an era is commemorated in the bronze medal that has been issued to all permanent employees of the Panama Canal Company and Canal Zone Government who were on the rolls as of September 30, 1979, and have at least one year of service. The medal is 1¼ inches in diameter to approximate the size of the Roosevelt Medal and is suspended from a bar bearing the aforementioned date. It features the seal of the Panama Canal Company on the front and the seal of the Canal Zone Government on the reverse side. The medals are serialized beginning with 00001. They have been distributed to employees with an accompanying certificate bearing the same serial number. The Panama Canal Company and Canal Zone Government Commemorative Medal was struck by the Medallic Art Company of Danbury, Connecticut.



*The scenes of Canal Zone life that appear on the certificates of appreciation are engraved by Dante A. Fiari, an audiovisual specialist for the Division of Schools.*



# Medals

## Chronicle

### History of

## Waterway



**H**UMAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS, whether they be athletic endeavors such as the Olympic Games of the Greeks or engineering feats such as the building of a waterway to join the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, have always been recognized or commemorated by a symbol. In the era of the Greeks and the Romans, the laurel wreath was used to distinguish individuals of achievement. In our day, the medal serves this purpose.

On at least five other occasions in the 74 years that have elapsed since the United States undertook to succeed where the French had failed, medals have been struck that had the Panama Canal as their motif.

The Roosevelt Medal, 1½ inches in diameter, was issued beginning in 1909 to civilian U.S. citizens who had completed at least two years of satisfactory service with the Canal construction forces or the Panama Railroad Company on the Isthmus between May 4, 1904 and December 31, 1914.

Made of bronze and copper "French junk," scrap metal from the equipment that had been abandoned by the

French, the medal features a bust of President Roosevelt on one side and a bird's eye view of steamers passing through Culebra Cut on the other.

The Panama Canal Completion Medal commemorating the opening of the waterway on August 15, 1914, is struck in bronze and has a very unusual design. On one side the medal depicts a ship passing through the Canal with Columbia, the female personification of the United States, standing at the bow. Her arms are outstretched with each hand resting on globes of the eastern and western hemispheres and a ribbon stretching across her body is inscribed in Latin "Columbia Unites the Oceans."

On the reverse is the seal of the Canal Zone and a statement certifying that the medal was carried on the vessel making the first transit of the Panama Canal.

In 1962, the opening of the \$20 million Thatcher Ferry Bridge which spans the Pacific entrance to the Canal was commemorated with a medal. The 2½ inch bronze and silver medals feature the bridge on the front, and the reverse is blank. The aluminum medals are an inch smaller

and show a map of the Isthmus on the reverse.

To celebrate the Canal's Golden Anniversary in 1964, a medal was struck in silver and bronze. On the front the medal incorporates the four points of the compass and a shield, inside of which a ship sails through Gaillard Cut. On the reverse is the seal of the Canal Zone.

The National Commemorative Society struck a silver coin-medal in 1971 to commemorate once again the opening of the Panama Canal and to honor Chief Engineer George W. Goethals. On one side is a bust of Goethals and on the other side is a ship in the Cut.

The medals of the Panama Canal chronicle the highlights of human accomplishment on the Isthmus and preserve them for posterity in the beauty of metal. But the Canal itself in all its concrete splendor is the living, functioning monument to those first visionaries who dared to dream of a waterway to connect the oceans; to the thousands more whose sweat and blood brought the dream to completion; and to the men and women today whose labor keeps it operating at peak efficiency 65 years later.

VISITORS DRIVING THROUGH Balboa for the first time are apt to slow down for a second look when they first spot the Statue of Liberty on Gorgona Road. Most are surprised to find a replica of this well known U.S. symbol so far south.

The Canal Zone statue, which faces the Balboa Fire Station, was donated to the Canal Zone Boy Scout Council in May 1951 by Morris Hoffman, a Kansas City, Mo. contractor and scouting enthusiast.

The original Statue of Liberty was formally presented on May 21, 1884 to the American ambassador in Paris by Ferdinand de Lesseps, head of the Franco-American Union, at that time at work on the ill-fated French effort to build a Canal in Panama.

The idea of a replica of the statue originated with Jack Whitaker, a Kansas City businessman and Scouter of long standing, during the 1951 "Strengthen the Arm of Freedom" crusade of the Boy Scouts of America.

A number of the 7½ foot high copper and bronze statues were made in a Chicago factory and presented to Boy Scout councils in 39 states. They are found gracing the grounds of eight state capitols, the lawns of 145 Court Houses, and 206 of the statues are located in Scout camps, school grounds and public buildings. In addition to the Canal Zone, the replicas also are found in the Philippines, Guam, Honolulu and Puerto Rico.

Although the Governor had approved the installation site in the triangle of land bound by La Boca Road, Balboa Road and the parking lot in front of the Balboa Police Station, there were no funds for the work and the statue was placed on display at the Canal Zone Library. When funds, mainly donations from the Boy Scout community, were available, the statue was installed at the selected site and dedicated on May 30, 1953.

The widening of Balboa Road made it necessary to move the statue to another area. It was relocated in May 1972 to its present site where it is often photographed by tourists.

## *Celebrated Symbol A Surprise to Sightseers*



# For A Quarter of A Century A Balboa Landmark



*Symbolic in concept, the monument rising from a reflecting pool 65 feet in diameter, represents the Continental Divide. The basins on each side represent the Panama Canal locks with water pouring from them to join the waters of Gatun Lake with the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The shaft of marble is 56 feet high, 20 feet wide and 5 feet thick. It was designed by Shaw, Metz and Dolio, an architectural firm of Chicago with the firm of Mendez and Sander of Panama as associate architects and was built by Constructora Martinz of Panama at a cost of \$152,299.*

**T**HE GOETHALS MONUMENT which stands at the foot of the 113 steps which lead up to the front of the Administration Building was 25 years old this year. After a quarter of a century as a Balboa landmark, it is such an accepted part of the landscape that even old-timers have trouble remembering when it was not there.

Yet, there was much controversy about the design and site for the monument and it took more than 25 years of discussion, delays, indecision, and planning before the memorial to the "hero of the Panama Canal" was erected in the Canal Zone. It was finally dedicated March 31, 1954.

Efforts to build a monument to perpetuate the memory of General Goethals went on for years and formal plans were presented in May 1928 at the annual meetings of the various Panama Canal societies in the United States.

The many years that elapsed between the planning and fulfillment of the project were not due to lack of enthusiasm. World circumstances, the depression of the early 1930s and World War II were the main delaying factors.

Through the years, various proposals for a suitable site and for the memorial itself and other recognitions of Goethals were presented. Resolutions were introduced in the House of Representatives to change the name of Gatun Lake, Dam, Spillway and Locks to Goethals Lake, Dam, Spillway and Locks. Another suggestion was to change the name of the town of Gamboa to Goethals. A Goethals memorial library was suggested as were memorial museums, buildings and statues including a statue for the rotunda in the Administration Building. All of these ideas were discarded as unsuitable.

On August 25, 1935, Congress appropriated \$160,000 to build a memorial and President Franklin D. Roosevelt named General John J.

Pershing to head the Goethals Memorial Commission.

One suggestion given considerable attention at that time was a memorial at the Cristobal mole at the Atlantic entrance of the Canal. Another was a shaft or obelisk at one or both entrances to the Canal. President Roosevelt favored the proposal of a shaft with a beacon light to be placed atop one of the two hills in the Canal Zone.

The Cristobal site continued to be reviewed and discussed until World War II when the construction of the memorial was postponed for the duration.

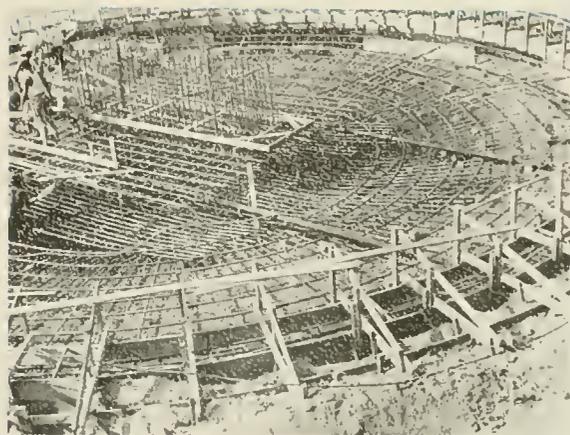
Still, efforts to give recognition to Goethals continued and in early 1943, a group of Canal employees who had served with him suggested a bronze bust to be placed in the Governor's office. A letter was written to Tiffany and Company of New York asking if a bust about 12 inches high could be produced for \$1,000 or less. Tiffany replied that it lacked the capability and called attention to a government regulation prohibiting the use of bronze as the metal was needed for the war effort.

At about the same time, there was another movement to erect a 2' by 3' bronze memorial tablet "somewhere in the Canal Zone." It was to be made of "historic bronze," melted down old machine tools, that were used in the construction of the Canal. About 300 pounds were required for the proposed tablet that was to weigh about 150 pounds and was to be cast by Gorham of New York.

In 1945, the ultimate tribute was suggested but Governor J. C. Mehafey was strongly opposed to changing the name of the Panama Canal to Goethals Canal.

After the war, the Goethals Memorial Commission was reactivated and interest was revived in the Cristobal site proposal which had been approved by Presidents Roosevelt and Truman. Balboa, Miraflores, Gatun and the Fortified Islands were added to the list of possible sites for the memorial, but by this time costs had risen markedly and efforts to have funds increased by Congress were not successful.

At a meeting of the Commission in Washington on February 4, 1952, Chairman Ralph Budd presented a tentative design prepared by Alfred



*At right: Workmen install steel reinforcement for the base of the memorial. Below right: Monument begins to take shape. Below: More than 2,000 persons gather for the dedication, many of them enjoying the comfort of the Tivoli Guest House wicker chairs.*



Shaw of a Chicago architectural firm for a shaft of reinforced concrete with an outside shell of precast concrete which would be simpler and less costly than the proposed Cristobal design and could be built with available funds.

After further discussions, the Commission authorized the chairman to proceed with the Shaw design for a monument in the circle in front of the

Balboa Elementary School. The Commission approved it on April 4, 1952 and when President Truman was presented the proposal a few days later, he approved it wholeheartedly.

Because of the possible hazard to low flying planes, the memorial site was moved to the foot of the Administration Building steps facing the Prado.

Work progressed on schedule and was expected to be completed on August 1, 1953 with August 15, the Canal's 40th anniversary, tentatively set as the date to hold the dedication ceremony. The date was postponed however, until the dry season, and Governor J. S. Seybold appointed a Goethals Memorial Dedication Program Committee.

A rendition of "Stars and Stripes Forever" by the joint Balboa-Cristobal high school band opened the formal dedication ceremony. A half-hour concert by the band preceded the official ceremony as more than 2,000

revered the memory of General Goethals.

Following the invocation by Rev. Alexander Shaw of the Balboa Union Church and Governor Seybold's introductory remarks and the reading of the message sent by President Eisenhower, who had designated that day a holiday for Canal employees, the honorable Maurice Thatcher, presented \$25 U.S. Savings bonds to the winners of the Canal Zone schools essay contest on Goethals' contributions to the Panama Canal. Ms. Emily Butcher directed the La Boca Alumni Glee Club in a rendition of "American

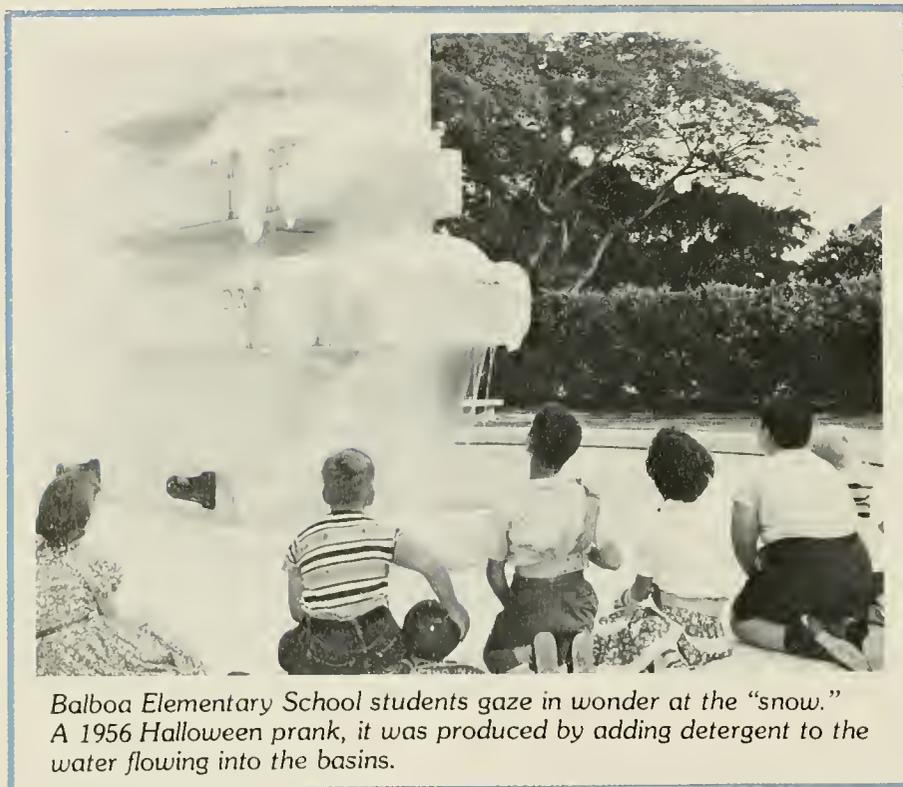
old-timers at the Goethals Exhibit at the Little Gallery in the Civil Affairs Building. There were many activities including teenage baseball games in which grandsons of the old-timers participated.

At the dedication, Governor Seybold said, "The Canal itself is a great and lasting memorial to him and to the skill and perseverance of a great army of men who shared in its construction. This marble shaft is a visible mark of the respect and honor we pay to him and to his associates in the achievement of a task of herculean proportions and of immeasurable benefit to humanity . . ."

In the formal presentation of the memorial, Dr. Whitehead spoke of events that led to the construction of the Panama Canal and after lauding Goethals' life and work in Panama as a model of inspirational leadership, he said, "The Congress of the United States authorized the erection of this Memorial to General George W. Goethals in commemoration of his signally distinguished services in connection with the construction and operation of the Canal. By authority vested in me by the Goethals Memorial Committee, under whose direction the wishes of Congress have been complied with, I hereby dedicate this Memorial to all nations and to all people."

In his message read by Governor Seybold, President Eisenhower said, in part, "it is indeed fortunate that a man of the stature of General Goethals was available to lead our construction force in this great undertaking and to set the pattern for its successful operation. It is only fitting that we should attempt to perpetuate his memory by erecting a memorial near the site of the humanitarian enterprise to which he was so selflessly dedicated."

In addition to commemorating the outstanding contributions of General Goethals to the commerce of the world, the ceremony highlighted the 50th anniversary of the taking over of the construction of the Canal by the United States from the French canal company. The year 1954 also marked the 40th anniversary of the appointment of Goethals as the first Governor of the Canal Zone and 47th anniversary of his appointment as chairman and chief engineer of the Isthmian Canal Commission.



*Balboa Elementary School students gaze in wonder at the "snow." A 1956 Halloween prank, it was produced by adding detergent to the water flowing into the basins.*

persons gathered for the dedication of the monument honoring the man whose remarkable leadership, administrative ability and devotion to the task contributed to the successful completion of the waterway.

Among the official guests were old-timers who forty years earlier had worked on the Canal during the Goethals era; members of the Goethals Memorial Commission; members of the legislative committee having jurisdiction over Canal affairs; former Canal Zone governors; Goethals' son; Maurice Thatcher, the only surviving member of the Isthmian Canal Commission; the President of Panama and other distinguished guests; Canal employees, and many others who

Ode." The Honorable Richard E. Whitehead, author of the book "Our Faith Moved Mountains," a member of the Goethals Memorial Commission, made the formal presentation of the Memorial Monument as Dr. Thomas R. Goethals stepped forward and unveiled the memorial to his famous father.

In addition to the formal dedication, an elaborate program of events was prepared for the old-timers, some in their late 70's and early 80's, who came from all parts of the United States to honor their hero.

Although not a part of the official dedication program, Mary Pickford and her husband Buddy Rogers, who were visiting the Isthmus, greeted the

## C.Z. Stamp Book A Collector's Item

THE BOOK, "CANAL ZONE Postage Stamps," which has been out of print, is on sale again. The Canal Zone Postal Service has reprinted the book to meet the demand which has developed with the increasing interest in Canal Zone stamps.

Always popular with collectors, Canal Zone stamps have attracted special attention lately following the announcement that the Canal Zone Postal Service is to be dissolved on implementation of the treaty which gives Panama jurisdiction in the Canal Zone.

However, it is not just the stamp collectors who are buying the book. Customers include those who are collecting all types of Canal Zone memorabilia and others who find it a handy reference book on the construction of the Canal and the development of the Canal Zone.

Reflecting on the book's historic value, Gov. William E. Potter, who served from 1956 to 1960, wrote in the foreword: "The postal history and stamps of the Canal Zone Government vividly reflect the early trials, heartbreaking failures and glorious completion of the Panama Canal. These bits of postage depict the ingenious planners, scenes of their work and the determined 'canal diggers' accomplishments."

"This book is an account of the birth and growth of the Canal Zone Government's postal system and its stamps. I trust it will help us to know and build upon our great heritage."

The 452-page paperback volume, which was prepared by the late Judge Edward I. P. Tateman, Magistrate of the Cristobal Court, was issued in 1961. The reprint of the book and a supplement, which covers the period up to the present, are now available through the General Services Division.

*At left: The book, "Canal Zone Postage Stamps," is displayed along with three of the early stamps honoring Canal Zone construction day figures, President Theodore Roosevelt, William C. Gorgas and George W. Goethals; and the last stamp to be issued by the Canal Zone Government, the new 15-cent stamp, which was made from a painting by Alwyn Sprague, well-known local artist.*

*In the centerfold: An assortment of items imprinted with the Canal Zone and Panama Canal Company seals and other items that were issued by the Company Government, all of which will be discontinued on October 1, are displayed on the door of a Company official car.*











## Nostalgia Rides the Rails as An Era Draws to A Close

**T**HE PANAMA RAILROAD IS one of a kind. For more than 70 years, it has been the only year-round passenger and freight operation of its kind run by the United States Government. The Isthmus' most effective means of mass transit, the railroad has carried a good share of the freight moving between Colon and Panama—about evenly divided among the Canal organization, U.S. military installations in the Canal Zone, and Panama—and has also handled most of the container cargo between the two ports. In fiscal year 1978, it transported 66,136 passengers and 184,162 tons of freight.

Long accustomed to adapting to the vicissitudes of life, the Panama Railroad is now weathering yet another change. Under the terms of the new Panama Canal Treaty, the railroad passes, along with its supporting operations, to the Government of Panama.

The Panama Railroad has seen a lot of history. In fact, it has been one of the chief actors in the drama of the Isthmus of Panama.

It gave birth to a city. In 1847, William Henry Aspinwall, a New York merchant, raised eyebrows by setting out to build a railroad across the Isthmus and combine sea and land routes into one great system that

would open up the whole Pacific. The railroaders chose Manzanillo Island—a square mile of virgin mangrove swamp—as the Atlantic terminus, and transformed it into what was to become the city of Colon.

It killed thousands of men. The construction workforce was drawn from the four corners of the earth—England, France, Ireland, Germany, Austria, China, India, Jamaica, Colombia. Of the perhaps 12,000 of these who died of malaria, yellow fever, or other hardships of wilderness life and work, 6,000 found their final resting place at the railroad cemetery at Mount Hope.

It played its part in the California

Gold Rush. In 1851, after 20 months of labor, the rails reached only 8 miles into the jungle, to Gatun. In October of that year, two steamers were beset by a hurricane that drove them from the mouth of the Chagres (the usual place of debarkation) to shelter in Navy Bay. From their anchorage, the gold-rabid passengers spied the work train, and there was no keeping them back. Since that day, the Atlantic port of Panama has been Colon.

It conquered the mighty Chagres River. The river—300 feet wide and sometimes rising 40 feet overnight—swept away the first bridge at Barba-coas. But by late 1853 it had been

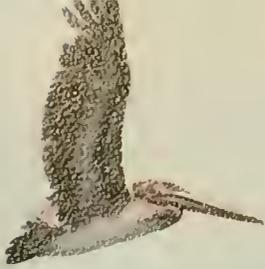
spanned by a 625-foot, six-span bridge of boiler iron. And on went the railroad, until in 1855 it went from coast to coast, 47.51 miles over bottomless swamps and through near impenetrable jungle, till it neared Ancon Hill and the sparkling cathedral towers of the city of Panama.

It made the Canal possible. In 1881 the Panama Railroad was bought by the French canal company, and when that enterprise failed the railroad faded away to "two streaks of rust and a right of way." The U.S. Government acquired it in 1904, and under the Canal's chief engineer John F. Stevens the railroad sprang to life again. Rebuilt to handle an endless stream

of dirt trains and vastly increased commercial traffic, it offered its passengers an unparalleled view of one of the wonders of the modern world in the making. By 1912, the railroad line had been relocated on higher ground and the original line was abandoned to make way for the waters of the Canal it had helped create. Fittingly, the inaugural transit on August 15, 1914, as made by the Panama Railroad steamship Ancon.

Since that day, as before it, the Panama Railroad has carried on its proud tradition of service to the Canal, to Panama, and to the world.

An era draws to a close, now, but the Panama Railroad goes on.



# Canal Zone Forests . . .

By Dr. Nathan B. Gale and  
Dolores E. Suisman

**F**EW URBAN DWELLERS SHARE as much of their living space with jungle animals as do those who live in the Canal Zone. It is because we see these wild creatures so frequently that we take them so for granted. When ecologists speak of endangered species, we think—if we think at all—that they are talking about exotic creatures that inhabit forbidding jungles we dare not enter.

The key to understanding is to remember the animals we are intimately familiar with, the creatures of the wild that come so timidly into man's territory: deer that emerge at the forest edge at dusk to search for food, then flee back into jungle hiding places at the approach of a car; a family of *ñeques* we pause to watch—but too late, the mother has been warned. She bristles, looks right and left, and with her offspring, scampers back into the forest; the armadillo we come upon on an evening walk; an iguana lazing in the sun on our doorstep; the hummingbird flitting from flower to flower outside our office window; birds of many colors and kinds we toss bread to.

These animals and birds we know and enjoy are some of the very ones ecologists are worrying about when they warn of the need for conservation and preservation of Canal Zone forest areas. For the Zone is a biological island of vegetation, animals, birds and insects that inhabit its undisturbed jungles and streams. In its lush rain forests, millions of creatures live and everything that lives in the jungle dies, decays and becomes food for new life.

It all began about 5.7 million years ago, when a series of geographical groans and tortuous twistings of the

newly emerged ocean floor created a land bridge, the Isthmus of Panama.

This fortuitous geological event created the narrow strip of land that one day would attract explorers on their way to the Orient, plunderers of Incan treasures, travelers to California gold fields, engineers building a railroad and a canal—and wildlife in abundance. The land bridge heaved up from the ocean floor came to be at least as important to the birds, mammals, and reptiles of the Americas as it has been to the commerce of man.

Land dwelling animals used this bridge to move into better grazing and browsing areas, and to search for more abundant or easier-to-catch prey. Many found the route from temperate to tropical climate to their liking, settled here, and developed diverse species.

Some of these—bats, marsupials and sloths—are still here. Some are already gone forever, like the giant ground sloth which competed successfully with the environment until about a thousand years ago when it became extinct.

With the Canal came the Canal



Zone that today is the last safe haven for many endangered and threatened species.

Because of restrictions on public access to the Panama Canal watershed and defense areas, much of the Canal Zone is an "island of forest" in the midst of a generally cleared countryside. This has helped preserve an astonishing variety of plants and animals in what is probably the most extensive readily accessible forest area in Middle America.

The continued existence of these forests is ecologically important. They must be left unscathed if the birds and animals that inhabit or seasonally visit them are to survive. Many forest-dwelling animals have special food requirements and are dependent upon unique habitats. It may be difficult—or impossible—for them to relocate. Many birds also are limited in their choice of habitat or migration route by their poor long-range flying ability.

It is rare in Latin America to find areas set aside for biological reserves or national parks. But the ecological significance of the Zone's forests was recognized within a decade of the

## Flora and Fauna

Canal's opening; in 1923, Barro Colorado was set aside as a biological reservation. Measuring about six square miles in area, the island is the largest in Gatun Lake.

In 1930, the Canal Zone Forest and Wildlife Preserve (Madden Forest) was established, and hunting, injuring or molesting wild life; and cutting down, destroying or damaging timber or plants was prohibited in its 3,500 acres.

More recently, hunting was prohibited on the land along the Pipeline Road beyond Gamboa.

The importance of Barro Colorado Island, the immediate area of the west bank of the Canal, and the Pipeline Road area is illustrated by the number of species protected by law that live there. Sixty-three percent of the animal species protected by Panamanian game laws have been seen there. The U.S. Endangered Species Act lists 157 species of mammals endangered throughout the world. Forty (26 percent) live in North and South America, and of these, eight are found on Barro Colorado Island and in the Pipeline Road area. Thus five percent of all endangered mammals in the

The Isthmus of Panama offers food and shelter to both North and South American bird migrants. The concentrating effect of the narrow topography on migratory routes offers a greater variety of avian life, when added to the native birds, than any other area of comparable size in the world.

Five hundred sixty-two species of birds have been recorded from Canal Zone waters, shorelines, and forested areas. This is only 80 less than are found in all of North America north of Mexico. The highest one-day bird census recorded in the world was reported last year from the Atlantic side of the Canal Zone when 354 species were counted.

The continued undisturbed existence of these areas could be justified solely on the basis of their research value. A Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute publication lists 2,071 books and papers (through 1976) written in the most part by scientists working on Barro Colorado Island, in the Canal Zone or in the Republic of Panama. The significance of data provided by this enormous volume of literature is extraordinary.

The most recent Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute publication, a nearly 1,000-page volume entitled *Flora of Barro Colorado Island* by Thomas Croat, has been 10 years in the making. The author indicates that over 1,300 species of "vascular plants," which have a specialized conducting system, are known from the island. A recent collection of 200 plants from the forest canopy included three species new to the island and one new to Central America.

If this area is to remain a safe harbor for plant, animal and bird life, their jungle home must remain undisturbed. If the jungles are disturbed, the animals will be destroyed, for, on a jungle "island," they have nowhere else to go.

The bush dog and the giant anteater may be nearing extinction in Panama. Jaguars, ocelots, margays and sloths, monkeys, marmosets and coatimundi, raccoons, squirrels and kinkajous, crocodiles and caimans may face the same fate.

The rich array of flora and fauna in the Canal Zone is a legacy from a passing era. One hopes they will become a living testimonial to wise men who, appreciating the legacy, will work to resolve the conflict between the pressure for rapid economic development in the Canal area on the one hand, and the need to preserve the natural environment to ensure the continued existence of this serendipitous jungle on the other.



world and 20 percent of those in North and South America occur in these two areas.

The land along the Pipeline Road is an area of relatively undisturbed tropical lowland wet forest which contains 240 species of birds which are not found outside the American tropic. An additional 35 North American species use this area as a migratory route to South America.

*a  
wonderful  
bird  
is the  
pelican . .*



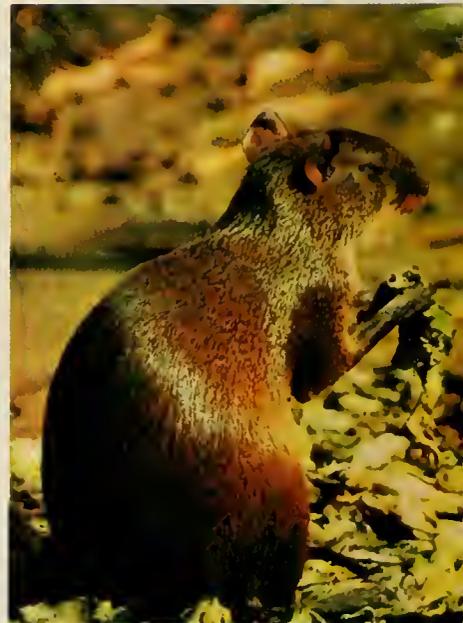
*a safe haven for animals . . .*



*The rare tiger heron, the long-tongued tamandua, the golden frog, the exotic heliconia and Charlie the crocodile are a few of the living things that thrive in the Canal Zone's tropical forests.*



# plants, birds and insects



*A delicate butterfly resting on a branch; multicolored macaws out for a stroll; the hairy sloth whose face we rarely see; stately egrets fishing in the surf; creatures great and small each have a niche in our tropical environment.*





# Flowering Trees



At far left, the sidewalk on Heights Road across from the Governor's House is awash with the blossoms of the Guayacón. Center, the view of the Administration Building through the branches of the Pink Cassia is reminiscent of Washington, D.C. at cherry blossom time, while the purple Bougainvillea and the Royal Poinciana bring La Boca Road alive with color. At right, Flomboyant is another and very fitting name for the Royal Poinciana, seen through the window of a Gorgos Apartment.

As soon as the first permanent Canal Zone towns were completed, plans for planting trees to beautify the area began immediately. The *Canal Record* of May 5, 1915 reported that the horticulturist in charge of the landscaping was urging residents to join in the effort. He encouraged tasteful planting and proper community care to relieve the "glistening newness of the new concrete town of Balboa and eventually transform it into a beautiful dwelling place, delightful to live in."

As a result of these plantings, there are always some trees that are in bloom in the Canal Zone; but it is during the dry season that the most spectacular exhibitions occur. The array of blossoms that suddenly appears on the local trees at this time rivals the splendor of spring in the temperate zone.

On these pages are some of the many flowering trees that have transformed modest Canal Zone homes into places "delightful to live in."





**a man  
does not plant  
a tree for himself,  
he plants it for  
posterity**

—Alexander Smith

*Below, the dry season breezes stir the branches of the Yellow Poinciana at the foot of the Administration Building hill creating a blur of color. At top left, motorists traveling Gaillard Highway to Gambia will come upon the native Jacaranda, a patch of purple in the midst of green jungle. Below, the Royal Poinciana offers its shade to a family from the "fishbowl" area in Ancon. At top right, a Flamboyant in Margarita has become the resting place for a boy's kite, but not for long. Below, the center of town is also beautified by the Pink Cassia.*





TROPICAL AREA

# Canal Zone's Garden of Eden

**L**UXURIOUS GREEN GROWTH in myriad of shades and textures, delicate tropical plants and fascinating exotics are taken for granted in the Canal Zone, where they form a constant background for life itself.

Nonetheless, at Summit Gardens, life-long Zone residents are filled with awe and curiosity to find themselves in the midst of 300 acres of nature's beauty gathered from almost every tropical and subtropical corner of the earth.

Since the establishment in 1923 of the "Canal Zone Plant Introduction Gardens" to test, establish and distribute valuable plants, more than 15,000 plants of an endless assortment, size and shape have been introduced.

Today, the Gardens have about 200 varieties of palms, some five acres of citrus trees, most of the flora native to the Isthmus and exotic fruit, flowering and economic plants from as far away as India, Sumatra, Malaya, Ceylon, China, Burma and Borneo and as near as Panama's neighbors in Central America.

Not far inside the gardens is the Tropical Walk, designed for walking tours through the area where the heaviest concentration of plants compete for living space in a tropical rain forest. The entrance is lined with the fabulously beautiful Night-Blooming Cereus and with petrified wood formed when the Isthmus was under the sea.

Scientists and industrialists have visited the gardens to observe experiments in the raising of teakwood or rubber or medicinal drugs and stayed to wonder at the strange display of nature's curios that man has gathered in this tropical garden.



There are the Talipot, giant of palms, with 15-foot fan leaves; stands of bamboo that grow as much as a foot in 24 hours; and the "scramble eggs" tree, from which natives make a dish they say tastes just like scrambled eggs by boiling and then frying the white meat of the ripe fruit.

There are magosteens, a fruit called the "queen of the tropics" described as tasting like a combination of all one's favorite fruits; and the "miraculous fruit" that

temporarily kills all sour taste buds on the tongue so one can eat the sourest of lemons without the slightest puckering of the lips.

And there is a profusion of orchids in almost limitless variety with blooms that may last a single day or for two months and whose flower stalks may be a few inches long or 20 feet long.

Above all there is Summit Garden's gift of a recuperative lift to the spirit for those who will pause to contemplate the wondrous cycles of the delights of nature.

*Above: This orchid, which grows at Summit, is found in Mexico and many parts of South America. Below: The lily pond, a favorite picnic spot. Bottom: The sun shining through a bambaa forest creates a distinctively tropical auro.*





## The Canal Today

### Era of the "SuperCarrier" Begins

By Willie K. Friar

**T**HE TRANSIT OF THE *BARBER Toba* in March of this year signaled the arrival of the age of the "SuperCarrier," the newest concept in shipping.

The first of the Barber Blue Sea Line's fleet of six, this extraordinarily versatile vessel is capable of carrying trailers, containers, and a great variety of other cargo by utilizing the most modern and sophisticated roll-on/roll-off cargo handling equipment available.

The significant difference between this vessel and earlier designs is the hinged ramp that is as wide as a two-lane highway. It is this ramp at the stern of the ship that attracted so much interest during the transit of the Canal. Starting out with a minimum width of 40 feet and gradually increasing to 82 feet at the hinge, the huge, angled ramp allows unrestricted two-way traffic for moving cargo on and off the ship. With the capability for easier, safer and more efficiently controlled traffic movement, it is possible for the *Barber Toba*, to handle up to 800 tons of cargo an hour.

*The "Barber Toba" moves through Gaillard Cut on her maiden voyage.*





Above: The "Barber Toba" uses her ramp, which is as wide as a two-lane highway, to handle a variety of trailers and containers. At left: The gigantic hinged ramp is folded against the stern of the vessel as she moves through Miraflores Locks.

Described by the ship's owners as "the greatest cargo handling tool ever invented," this ramp has a load bearing capacity of 400 tons which is equivalent to the weight of 50 sixty-passenger schoolbuses.

Trailer cargo, known as roll-on/roll-off or "ro-ro" in the shipping trade, has become an increasingly popular way of moving goods in many world ports including those in the United States, and Panama. The trailers are simply driven on an off the ships.

However, it is not the trailer carrying capability that is noteworthy on the *Barber Toba* but the flexibility of carrying and handling all types of cargo and being able to be completely self-sufficient in loading and discharging. The *Barber Toba* carries its own fleet of forklifts, trailers, and gigantic crane, which can lift up to 40 tons.

This capability makes it a valuable means of transport for developing countries in South America, the Far East and the Middle East, where often only limited cargo handling facilities are available. The fast loading and unloading capability is a great asset also in ports, such as Miami, where crowded conditions make turnaround time very important. It has been

estimated by its owners that it costs about \$25,000 a day in operating expenses to keep a ship like the *Barber Toba* in port. Depending on the weather, this ship and its sisters can move into a port, load or unload, and leave in a matter of hours.

Another innovation on this ship is its containerized office. All loading and discharging operations are controlled by crew members operating from this special office. It is stored aboard the ship and lifted into place at quayside near the stern ramp at each port to coordinate cargo handling activities. Supervisors and other crew members drive around the vessel in four-wheel electric cars keeping in contact with the portside operations office by walkie-talkies.

The flexibility and versatility of these SuperCarriers allows them to transport all types of containers and rolling stock. Cars and other wheeled vehicles can be driven aboard and do not have to be boxed.

The deck for carrying cars has a special surface which prevents shifting and eliminates damage during the voyage. When cars are not being carried, this deck is hoisted up to make room for more containers on the deck below.

It took nine months to build the *Barber Toba*, which is 749 feet in length and 105 feet in beam, at a cost of \$33 million. It cost more than a million dollars just to equip the engine room and bridge which have the most

modern instruments available today. This includes computerized anti-collision radar, a satellite navigation receiver, gyro compass, echo sounder, electromagnetic log, weather facsimile, radio equipment and an alarm system connected to 250 sensors for safe operation of the engine room.

Although capable of carrying up to 1,800 20-foot containers, 400 automobiles and 2,150,000 cubic feet of baled cargo, the ship requires a crew of only 27. Facilities for the crew (both men and women) include a swimming pool, exercise room, recreation room, library and private cabins with baths for each member of the crew.

When the *Barber Toba*, a Norwegian flag ship transited the Canal, she was carrying mainly containerized cargo from the Far East including electronics, textiles, handicrafts, tile, cars, and yachts, from Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea, to be transported to the United States.

After the ship leaves U.S. ports, it will head for the Middle East, with a different cargo which will be, for the most part, rolling stock including heavy machinery, and oil drilling equipment.

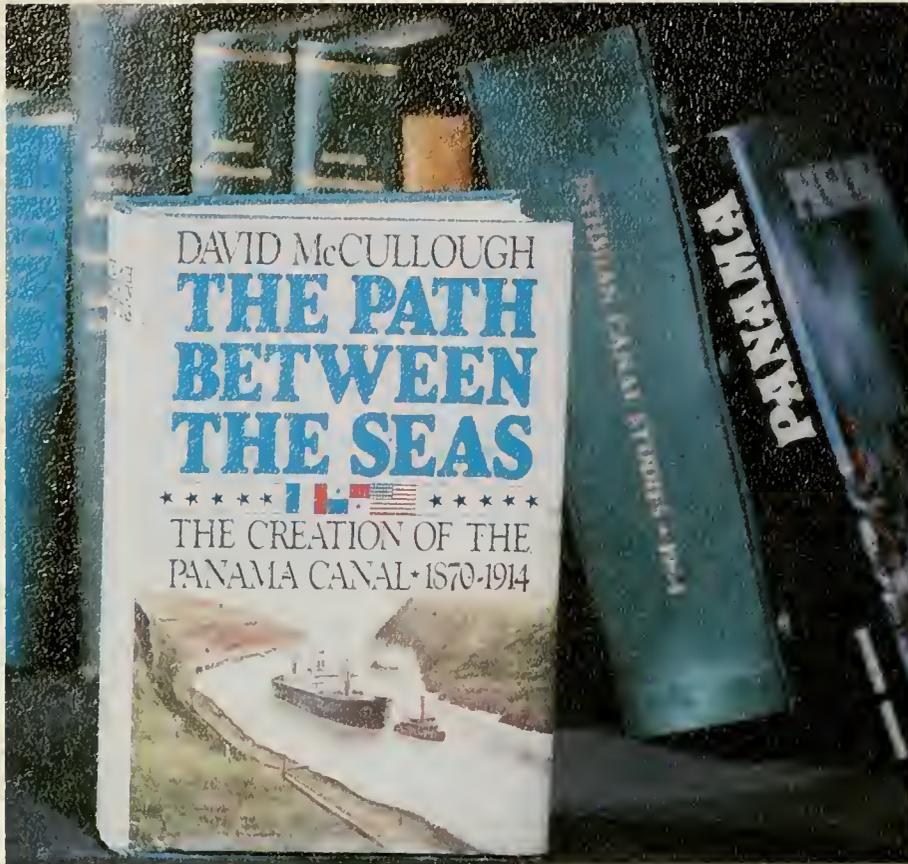
A British, Norwegian, and Swedish consortium, Barber Blue Sea is investing nearly \$200 million in a fleet of six of these advanced multi-purpose vessels, which are to be regular customers of the Canal.

The agent for Barber Blue Sea at the Canal is C. B. Fenton & Co.



*One of the largest dipper dredges in the world, the "Rialto M. Christensen" works in Mamei Curve removing islands and widening the Canal to provide a safer passage for the increasing number of large ships. Below: Telephoto lens captures heavy traffic in Gaillard Cut and Pedro Miguel Locks. At right: A container ship in Gatun Locks and ships moving under the fog shrouded bridge that spans the Canal at Balboa.*





## All That's Left Is Her Whistle

By Robert H. Burgess

She WAS A GRAND LADY IN her day. She had to be for selection in the role she was to play in the opening of the Panama Canal. However, she wasn't all that glamorous. Instead, she was just another of the hundreds of pieces of equipment which did the job thoroughly and helped bring the entire project to completion. She was a lowly tugboat which pulled scows laden with mud and rock dredged from the Canal site from 1906 to its opening in 1914. Then she remained on the job in the Canal Zone for 16 more years helping to clear slides, dock ships, and numerous other tasks assigned to a craft of all



Her brass fittings highly polished, the "Gatun" steamed ahead of the "Ancon" on the inaugural transit of the Canal August 15, 1914. Above: The "Gatun" can be seen clearly in the painting that appears on the dust jacket of the recent book about the Canal, "The Path Between the Seas."

trades. This was the steel tug *Gatun* which was given the honor of being the first vessel to transit any of the locks of the Panama Canal.

*Gatun* started her career in 1902, having been built that year by the well-known shipbuilding firm of Neafie & Levy of Philadelphia. Measuring 91 feet in length, she was originally named *H. B. Chamberlain* and owned by Boot, Dailey & Irving, with a home port in New York. It is probable that her job was to shunt scows and barges around New York harbor and possibly assist ships in docking—but not for long. In 1906, as the United States was gaining momentum in developing the Canal, a search was made for floating equipment to assist in the monumental task. The *Chamberlain* was purchased by the Isthmian Canal Commission, Atlantic Division, for \$65,000 and renamed *Gatun*. She was based at the Atlantic end and assigned the mundane but important job of towing mud barges and shifting other equipment.

There were other tugs in the Canal's fleet but somehow the *Gatun* seemed to stand out in the limelight a little more than these judging from

some of her other assignments. Inspection parties would board her to view the progress of the work. And occasionally she was used to transport and transfer prominent members of the Canal's staff and government officials. After Chief Engineer John F. Stevens resigned his job on March 31, 1907, he boarded the *Gatun* at Pier 11 at Cristobal to be taken to the liner *Panama* to return to the States.

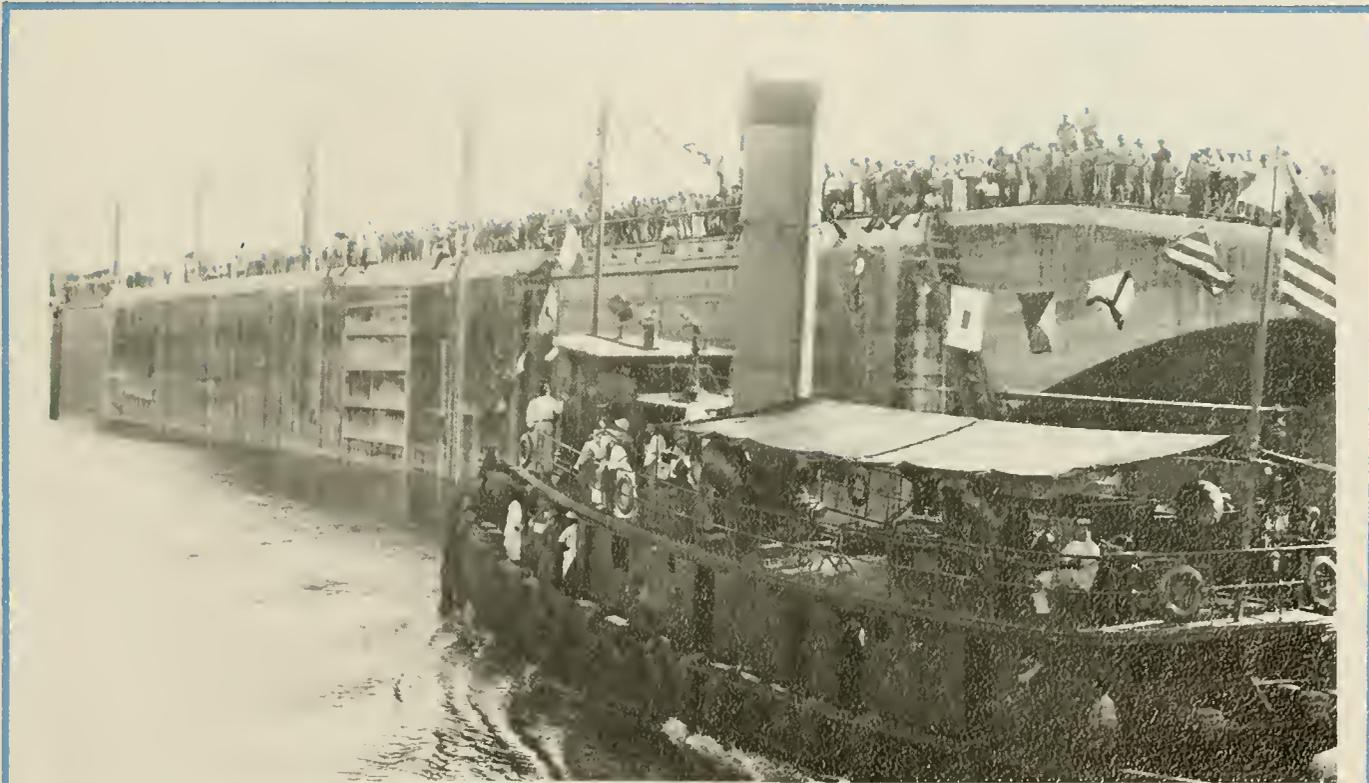
*Gatun* was just an ordinary tug, nothing fancy about her makeup, but her crew must have taken especial pride in her appearance. Photos taken of her during her early years at Panama reveal all her brass fittings glistening in the sun, the rims of her portholes, the searchlight and binnacle atop her pilothouse, door knobs and locks, running lights, and fire hose nozzles. Around the topsides of her hull and draped over her bow, were large rope mats to protect her sides when she was working with the heavy, rugged scows and dredges.

Come the latter part of 1913, the Canal was readied for operation. Just how the selection was made is not known but the tug *Gatun* was given

## The Canal Yesterday

### The *Gatun* led the way on opening day

the honor of being the first vessel to pass through a set of the Canal locks. She was cleaned up and for the occasion bedecked with flags as she departed from Colon for the Gatun Locks. Additional lifejackets had been placed around her main deck in anticipation of the extra passengers she was to carry on that trip. Folding chairs were placed on her upper deck under a permanent canvas awning to accommodate the dignitaries. But her rugged rope mats remained in position overside indicating that she was a working vessel taking a holiday for the day. And a special one it was.



*Bedecked with flags, the tug "Gatun" enters Gatun Locks, September 26, 1913 to become the first vessel to pass through the newly completed lock chambers.*



On September 25, 1913, preliminary tests and filling of the Gatun Locks were made and all operated as planned. The 26th had been selected to lift the *Gatun* from the sea channel to the Gatun Lake level, using the west flight, because of the imminent departure from the Isthmus of Maj. James P. Jervey, who had charge of the masonry construction of Gatun Locks, and of Maj. George M. Hoffman, who had charge of the building of



*The steam tug "Chester," formerly "Gatun," was tied up at Pratt Street, Baltimore, Maryland, in June 1958 just before being sold for scrapping. At left: The steam whistle from the tug is now mounted on a wooden block at the author's home. The small whistle at lower right, used to assist in docking ships, was added after the tug left the Canal Zone.*

Gatun Dam, as assistants to their chief, Lt. Col. William L. Sibert.

At 11:20 a.m., water was admitted to the upper end of the upper lock from the west culvert through the upper rising stem valves and the water was brought up to lake level. The upper rising stem valves were then closed and this water was passed down the flight of three locks as a preliminary test of the valves and culverts of the west wall. Water was then locked down, step by step, from the lake to the lower lock, which was also being filled by the two 14-inch sea valves in the lower guard gates.

On board the *Gatun*, in addition to her regular crew, were Col. H. F. Hodges, Lt. Col. and Mrs. William L. Sibert and family, Maj. and Mrs. James P. Jervey, Maj. George M. Hoffman, Lt. and Mrs. George W. Goethals (the Chief Engineer's son), Mr. Henry Goldmark, Mrs. Edward Schildhauer, Mrs. E. E. Lee, Capt. B. Corning of the steamship *Panama*, and Mr. Frank Thompson of the Panama Railroad. Capt. F. F. Stewart was master of the tug and Mr. W. G. Comber was chief navigator.

The filling of the lower lock was completed by 4:45 p.m. when the sea gate was opened. The *Gatun*, with whistle blowing and flags streaming in the breeze, steamed up the approach channel and past the entrance to the

lower lock, cheers from the spectators resounding within the lock. The lower operating gates were then closed and the tug came to a halt alongside the center wall. Col. George W. Goethals was on top of the lock wall watching the proceedings.

The operation was repeated in the middle lock and at 6:15 p.m. the *Gatun* entered the upper lock of the last lift. Half an hour later the two last gates were swung open and the tug passed out on to Gatun Lake, the whole passage requiring 1 hour and 51 minutes. The next day the *Gatun* returned to the Atlantic channel, the lockage taking 1 hour and 37 minutes.

On October 9, 1913, three groups of dredging vessels and a floating pile driver, in tow of tugs, a total of 13 vessels, were lifted at one time from the Atlantic entrance channel to the surface of Gatun Lake, using the entire 1,000 foot length of each chamber. The second group consisted of the *Gatun* with the suction dredge No. 86, several pontoons, and a fuel oil barge in tow.

More honors were bestowed upon the *Gatun* when she was selected as consort to the steamship *Ancon* on the official opening of the Canal on August 15, 1914. There is a photo of her steaming just ahead of the *Ancon*, approaching Cucaracha Slide, but she probably dropped astern at the appro-

## OCEANGOING COMMERCIAL TRANSITS BY NATIONALITY

Nationality	6 Months FY 1979		6 Months FY 1978	
	No. of Transits	Long Tons Cargo	No. of Transits	Long Tons Cargo
Belgian	48	963,208	29	627,782
British	513	5,638,581	514	4,536,526
Chilean	84	839,428	88	953,677
Chinese, Nationalist	60	665,140	49	574,120
Colombian	85	588,867	89	610,207
Danish	162	2,983,865	125	1,083,985
Ecuadorian	133	1,285,861	94	837,387
French	50	472,153	60	523,910
German, West	218	1,720,694	273	1,956,465
Greek	658	10,817,253	650	8,576,443
Honduran	51	81,063	36	52,978
Italian	104	692,154	126	745,095
Japanese	505	4,686,440	459	3,996,490
Liberian	962	17,588,995	925	14,529,111
Mexican	40	507,370	40	318,065
Netherlands	100	552,427	90	639,332
Norway	215	3,508,931	249	3,345,559
Panamanian	529	4,561,344	491	3,692,341
Peruvian	104	982,689	101	887,753
Singaporean	96	1,371,854	79	858,632
South Korean	77	1,020,390	43	410,208
Spanish	57	172,455	53	124,064
Swedish	97	822,423	131	1,199,120
United States	865	13,400,876	643	8,430,847
U.S.S.R.	236	1,104,734	111	685,339
Yugoslavian	50	547,959	67	508,552
All other	388	2,028,288	439	3,276,525
Total	6,487	79,605,442	6,054	63,980,513

## OCEANGOING COMMERCIAL TRANSITS OVER PRINCIPAL TRADE ROUTES

Trade route	6 Months FY 1979	6 Months FY 1978
	East Coast United States—Asia	1,531
East Coast United States—West Coast South America	765	615
Europe—West Coast South America	573	543
East Coast United States—West Coast Central America	608	485
Europe—West Coast United States/Canada	452	473
South American Intercoastal	179	207
U.S. Intercoastal (including Alaska and Hawaii)	191	184
East Coast United States/Canada—Oceania	185	172
Europe—Oceania	112	145
East Coast Canada—Asia	166	143
All Other	1,725	1,685
Total	6,487	6,054

## OCEANGOING COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC BY MONTHS

Months	Transits		Tolls (In thousands of dollars) <sup>1</sup>	
	FY 1979	FY 1978	FY 1979	FY 1978
October	1,115	1,028	\$18,279	\$14,995
November	1,089	947	17,611	14,280
December	1,087	1,002	18,232	14,848
January	1,072	1,000	16,849	14,433
February	949	942	15,162	14,199
March	1,175	1,135	19,443	17,022
Total	6,487	6,054	\$105,576	\$89,777

<sup>1</sup> Before deduction of any operating expenses.  
Statistic compiled by Executive Planning Staff

## PANAMA CANAL TRAFFIC

	6 Months	
	1979	1978
<b>TRANSITS (Oceangoing)</b>		
Commercial	5,487	6,054
U.S. Government	47	45
Free	7	3
Total	6,541	6,102
<b>TOLLS:</b>		
Commercial	\$105,617,016	\$89,799,541
U.S. Government	452,425	421,735
Total	\$106,069,441	\$90,221,276
<b>CARGO<sup>2</sup> (Oceangoing)</b>		
Commercial	79,605,442	63,980,513
U.S. Government	92,992	131,771
Free	—	—
Total	79,698,434	64,112,284

<sup>1</sup> Includes tolls on all vessels, oceangoing and small.

<sup>2</sup> Cargo figures are in long tons.

Statistics compiled by Executive Planning Staff.

priate moment so as not to take away any glory from the larger ship as the first vessel to transit the Panama Canal. That same scene appears in color on the dust jacket of the new book about the Canal, "The Path Between the Seas," but the little tug is never identified. With a magnifying glass this writer has seen the *Gatun's* name across the front of her pilot-house in a photo.

For 16 more years the *Gatun* was to remain in the Canal Zone carrying out the chores of a tug. About 1930 she returned to the United States and was renamed *H. B. Chamberlain*. About 1931 she was renamed *Point Breeze* and owned by the Donaldson Towing and Lightering Co. of Philadelphia, with the home port of Wilmington, Del. Moving scows and barges, and docking and undocking ships were her chief duties on the Delaware River.

In the early 1930's the *Point Breeze* shifted her operations to Baltimore carrying out a regular harbor routine of towing and assisting ships. While sailing out of that port she encountered what may have been the most harrowing experience of her career. On August 21, 1933, the tug left Baltimore for Gibson Island, Md., towing a barge filled with muck from a dredging operation in Baltimore harbor. When approaching the Seven-Foot Knoll Lighthouse 30 miles from Baltimore, she was wracked by heavy winds and seas. Water seeped below deck and the tug was in danger of sinking. The captain sounded 4 rapid blasts on the steam whistle in distress and awakened the keeper of

## PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES SHIPPED THROUGH THE CANAL

(in long tons)

### Atlantic to Pacific

Commodity	6 Months	
	FY 1979	FY 1978
Corn.....	7,126,998	4,479,041
Petroleum and products.....	5,643,842	5,098,725
Coal and coke.....	5,624,675	4,129,163
Soybeans.....	3,363,955	2,883,453
Wheat.....	2,851,969	1,332,006
Phosphate.....	2,795,941	2,219,164
Metal, scrap.....	1,937,733	751,867
Sorghum.....	1,446,366	1,490,771
Chemicals and petroleum chemicals.....	1,119,858	899,075
Manufactures of iron and steel.....	816,912	997,099
Sugar.....	735,883	554,090
Ores, various.....	696,038	759,013
Fertilizers, unclassified.....	567,414	716,011
Caustic soda.....	403,210	272,937
Ammonium compounds.....	343,928	319,537
All other.....	5,690,358	4,602,976
Total.....	41,165,080	31,504,928

### Pacific to Atlantic

Commodity	6 Months	
	FY 1979	FY 1978
Petroleum and products.....	16,370,359	10,102,124
Manufactures of iron and steel.....	2,761,109	4,108,626
Lumber and products.....	2,707,316	2,432,983
Ores, various.....	2,364,664	2,478,799
Coal and coke.....	1,562,542	630,473
Sugar.....	933,722	1,469,290
Food in refrigeration (excluding bananas).....	933,267	873,976
Pulpwood.....	868,870	768,143
Bananas.....	755,764	843,718
Metals, various.....	692,966	704,462
Sulfur.....	633,396	464,671
Autos, trucks, and accessories.....	549,006	579,526
Salt.....	456,742	314,613
Fishmeal.....	424,136	240,485
Wheat.....	396,348	554,930
All other.....	6,030,155	5,908,766
Total.....	38,440,362	32,475,585

## CANAL TRANSITS—COMMERCIAL AND U.S. GOVERNMENT

	6 Months FY 1979			6 Months FY 1978
	Atlantic to Pacific	Pacific to Atlantic	Total	
Commercial:				
Oceangoing.....	3,391	3,096	6,487	6,054
Small <sup>1</sup> .....	317	168	485	327
Total.....	3,708	3,264	6,972	6,381
U.S. Government:				
Oceangoing.....	22	25	47	45
Small <sup>1</sup> .....	72	76	148	104
Total.....	94	101	195	149
Grand Total.....	3,802	3,365	7,167	6,530

<sup>1</sup> Vessels under 300 net tons, Panama Canal measurement, or under 500 displacement tons. Statistics compiled by the Executive Planning Staff.

the light. Manning a small boat, the keeper went to the aid of 4 men who had jumped off the stricken vessel as she settled beneath the waters of Chesapeake Bay, and also recovered the body of the engineer who had died of a heart attack after he had jumped from the tug.

The *Point Breeze* was later raised, renamed *Chester* the next year, and resumed her career around Baltimore harbor. In 1957 the Curtis Bay Towing Co., of Baltimore, was recorded as her owner. Most of that firm's craft were newer diesel tugs less historical than the former *Gatun* but more suited to the needs of modern shipping. The *Chester* was laid up to await a purchaser but the only offer came from a scrapyard.

In late 1958 the *Chester* was acquired by the salvage firm of Martin G. Imbach, Inc. in Baltimore for breaking up. This writer long knew of the earlier career of the *Chester*, her historic association with the Panama Canal, and desired to preserve some relic from the craft. As the tug was being cut apart by torches, I was able to secure her brass steam whistle, 4 feet in length including its release valve, before it was shattered for melting down. If anything on the tug was original from her Canal days, other than her rugged hull, I felt it was the steam whistle which had blown so vigorously as the *Gatun* made her entry into the first of the Gatun Locks that eventful day in September 1913 when the world was shown that a vessel could be lifted from the Caribbean level to that of Gatun Lake. A whistle is just about indestructible. Only the valve, a separate unit, needs occasional replacing. This whistle compares favorably with the one appearing in photos of the *Gatun* taken at the time of the opening of the Canal when its hoarse tones echoed around the sides of the locks 65 years ago.

It is quite possible that this steam whistle, now mounted on a wooden block in the author's home, is the only portion of that historic ship in existence and serves as a reminder of the beginning of a new era in world shipping. And certainly the *Gatun* was one of the most long-lived of any of the numerous vessels which participated in the construction of the Panama Canal.



Mary and Herbert Knapp are teachers in the Canal Zone schools. They currently are at work on a book about life in the Canal Zone entitled *An Ambiguous Utopia*. It is a retrospective view of the unique community where those who built and operated the Panama Canal lived and worked for 75 years. The following article is a digest of a chapter from that book. The Knapps are also the authors of *One Potato, Two Potato: The Secret Education of American Children* (Norton, 1976).

# Looking Backward

By Mary and Herbert Knapp

THE AMERICAN CANAL ZONE in Panama belongs squarely in the American utopian tradition that runs from the Puritan "City upon a Hill" in seventeenth century Massachusetts to the latest condo "paradise" in Miami.

Not many of the blue-collar aristocrats or shirt-sleeved bureaucrats who lived on the Zone ever thought of it as a utopia, but when they came to the Zone they became part of a small-scale, managerial society designed according to a fairly rigid plan. The theory was that a pervasive paternalism with a corresponding restriction of certain liberties would result in the happiness, well-being, and most importantly, in the productiveness of the people.

It wasn't a perfect society, but utopias never are, except in books. Real utopias are experiments. They take place somewhat apart from the real world, somewhere between *eutopia*, "a good place," and *outopia*, "no place." That's right where the Canal Zone used to be, along with Brook Farm, the Oneida Community, Orderville, New Harmony, and hundreds of other American social experiments.

Of course, those in charge of the canal project didn't plan the Zone as a social experiment. When Charles Magoon, second governor of the Zone, proposed establishing a model government, he was plainly told that the Isthmian Canal Commission was in Panama to build a canal, period. Nevertheless, as the canal workers' communities developed, the Zone increasingly resembled the society described by Edward Bellamy in his futuristic utopian novel, *Looking Backward*.

Few people know that book today, but in the decade following its publication in 1888, *Looking Backward* outsold anything ever published in America except *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It appealed to "brains" and "roughnecks" alike; to wild-eyed socialist agitators and dewy-eyed social belles. Bellamy's admirers organized themselves and became a political force. In 1935 three American intellectuals called *Looking Backward* the second most influential book of the preceding half-century! According to John Dewey, James Beard, and Edward Weeks, only *Das Kapital* had more influence upon the world than *Looking Backward*.

The resemblance of the Canal Zone

to Bellamy's imaginary society didn't go unnoticed. A visitor reported in 1913, "The dream of the late Edward Bellamy is given actuality on the Zone"; about the same time Canal Zone Policeman 88 testified, "It strongly resembles what Bellamy dreamed of years ago." And as late as 1928, a Zonian was still explaining to tourists that her community was frequently referred to as "resembling Bellamy's *Looking Backward*." She went on to say, "When Bellamy journeyed across the Isthmus—in the eighties—Panama certainly did not present a possibility, even to the most visionary, of eventually becoming the nearest approach to . . . the ideal of the Utopia that his remarkable book pictures."

But it would be a mistake to suppose *Looking Backward* provided a blueprint for the Canal Zone. The Zone resembled several nineteenth century literary utopias, Etienne Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie* (1840), for instance. By the end of the nineteenth century a lot of people had come to similar conclusions about what a better world would be like. It would be very much like the Canal Zone.

In Cabet's utopia, everyone works for the government, which owns the factories, cultivates the land, and provides clothing and household furnishings—as was more or less the case in the Canal Zone. But the uncanny thing about Cabet's *Icaria* is that it looks like the Zone.

The city of *Icaria* is divided by a river that has been deepened and straightened to accommodate large ships. The river's banks have been fronted by straight walls. On an island in the middle of the river is a palace surrounded by trees and gardens, and on the terrace of the palace is a statue

of Icar, the founder, which overlooks the city.

The Zone, too was divided by a waterway, a canal, not a river, but the Chagres River was deepened and straightened to form the Canal, and at the locks one even sees the banks of the "river" enclosed in straight walls. The Zone's equivalent of Icaria's palace was the Administration Building—known on the Zone as "The Building"—as if there were no other. It is not on an island in the middle of the Canal, but it sits on a hill that rises like an island in the middle of the city of Balboa, and it overlooks the Canal. It is also surrounded by carefully arranged trees and plants. On the Building's terrace, between the flags of the United States and Panama, is a



"... how resourceful they are at devising methods to keep the streets clean."

large rock taken from the Cut—not a statue of the founder, but a monument to the founders: "Dedicated to the builders of the Panama Canal . . ."

The most outstanding feature of Icaria is its cleanliness. The character in Cabet's novel who describes the Icarians breaks into excited italics when he mentions how "resourceful they are at devising methods to keep the streets clean." He oh's and ah's about "subterranean canals" that drain water from the streets and about the absence of dust and mud.

His paradise is more notable for what it lacks than for what it contains. He says that the eyes of the citizens of Icaria are not offended by street-corner hangouts, advertisements, graffiti, "rich and pretty shops," or "those

paintings of nudes or voluptuous scenes. . . . Such pictures no husband would want his wife and the mother of his children to behold."

Anyone who ever lived on the Zone will be struck by its similarities to Icaria. The Zone, too, was remarkably clean. Its grass was kept cut; its trash, promptly removed. An admirable system of subterranean canals, created by Zone engineers, drained water from the streets, sidewalks, and airfields, mud was not something the average Zonian worried about—except mothers. Children often sought it out for games of mud football and mud sliding.

And like Icaria, the Zone was notable for what it lacked—cabarets, gaming houses, establishments of culpable pleasures. No commercial advertisements cluttered its landscape or airwaves. The Zone's television station advertised only morality and the military life. As for voluptuous scenes, a Zonian who wished to purchase *Playboy* at the Company commissary had to wait while the clerk took it from under the counter and stapled it inside a paper bag. The Zone, however, was never as pure as Icaria. It never, for instance, reached the point where it could do without gendarmes.

Unlike Cabet, who emphasizes the cleanliness and geometric order of his utopia, Bellamy emphasizes the organization of labor and the distribution of wealth in his. Bellamy's utopia doesn't have so much the look of the Zone as the "feel" of it.

As a story, *Looking Backward* is pretty corny. But Bellamy wasn't trying to write a literary masterpiece. He was a social reformer who wanted to promote equality and brotherhood—his "Religion of Solidarity"—and to make men less materialistic.

The central institution of his dream world is the Industrial Army. Everyone from age twenty-one to forty-five belongs. Related industries are grouped into ten divisions. The President of the United States, or "the general-in-chief," is chosen from among the retired division-chiefs. Only retired workers can vote, but everyone retires at forty-five. From twenty-one to twenty-four, everyone works as an apprentice or a laborer. His performance is regularly evaluated. Those with the highest scores get first choice of occupational

specialities. There are three grades in each industry and two classes in each grade.

The Zone was never quite like this, but it came close. Zonians were certainly members of an Industrial Army, one that included 1,754 different kinds of jobs. Only the Department of Defense listed a greater variety. And the Canal Army was organized much like Bellamy's Army. The Zone, too, had its divisions—Electrical, Dredging, Industrial, Railroad, Schools, and so on. What's more, all Zone workers were classified NM-9 or GS-10 or whatever, much like those in Bellamy's world. But Zonians weren't required to work as laborers for two years in their twenties, though the Zone did have a flourishing apprentice program. Nor did Zonians retire at forty-five and vote for their governor.

Age entitles you to privileges in Bellamy's paradise, and as a result, he was accused of advocating gerontocracy. On the Zone, age alone didn't entitle you to a thing, but length of service—ah, that was another matter. Length of service on the Zone could get you what money couldn't buy—assignment to the house of your choice.

Bellamy wanted to eliminate ostentatious displays of wealth which he thought were socially divisive, so everyone in his utopia received exactly the same pay—from generals to the inhabitants of insane asylums. Officers in the Industrial Army were rewarded with prestige and power but not cash. At the year's end, all unused money reverted to the state, so you couldn't get ahead of your neighbor by saving.

To further discourage people from buying things just to impress the Joneses, Bellamy standardized all products and eliminated competing retail outlets. Everyone shopped at the government store, where no new product was introduced unless customers petitioned for it.

People on the Zone were never economically equal, but there was a good deal more visible equality there than in most places. The limited kinds of housing available contributed to this impression of a relatively narrow range of inequality. And there was simply not much scope for conspicuous consumption in a community where everyone lived in rented

quarters and did most of his shopping at the “commy.”

Did the Zone’s approximation of Bellamy’s vision work? Did it encourage brotherhood? There was never any lack of squabbling on the Zone—especially about housing. Sometimes the smaller the difference between two houses, the greater difference it made to people—a point planners of future utopias would do well to consider. And visiting writers often note that social divisions continued to exist, something no Zonian would deny.

The problem was that the Zone was a one company community. There was no satisfactory way to achieve prominence outside the Company hierarchy. As a result, the social prestige of the hierarchy went unchallenged, though it was sometimes resented.

On the other hand, in a book published in 1928, a Zone resident keeps referring to the “democratic setting” of the Zone, and she praises the governor for his “democratic manner.” Clearly she’s not referring to a political system but to an atmosphere of informality. If people did not meet as equals on the Zone, they nonetheless met. The smallness of the Zone accounted for that. And usually Zonians were spared the pomp and circumstance of ostentatious inequality. Then, too, they shared a connection with an historic enterprise. All this may help explain why ex-Zonians who did not socialize on the Zone tend to greet one another like fraternity brothers when they meet elsewhere.

Bellamy’s second goal was to make men less materialistic. He assumed that given a margin of economic security, people would lose their taste for accumulating possessions. It never quite worked that way on the Zone, but for years the lack of air-conditioning on the Isthmus drastically limited the kinds of possessions a Zonian could have. In those days the sparseness and standardization of household furnishings would have pleased the most puritanical of Bellamy’s disciples.

Even after the introduction of the air-conditioning in 1957-1958, the restrictions on private enterprise and the simplicity of life on the Zone encouraged Zonians to devote them-

selves to a remarkable range of non-materialist avocations, ranging from volunteer community work to charting butterfly refuge areas in Central America.

The Zone never provided its residents with the array of choices and opportunities for personal development one finds in the United States. What it did provide was time. People lived close to their jobs; no one spent hours every day commuting to work. Nor were people offered a great variety of professional entertainment. There was plenty of time to “do one’s own thing” on the Zone.

Those things included studying shells, antique bottles, rocks, dialects, and South American folk dances. There were orchid men on the Zone, and snake men, bug men, bird men. Painters, potters, pathfinders: Experts on stage lighting, skin-diving, molas and the music of Elgar.

And all of these avocations carried Zonians beyond the boundary of the Zone into Panamanian theatrical and musical circles, Panamanian service organizations, kennel clubs, motorcycle competitions, sports arenas, and of course, into Panama’s mountains and jungles.

One of the drawbacks of the Zone as a utopia is that it was too small. Few could have remained happy on the Zone for long had it not been for Panama and United States “out there” with their broader horizons. For all its virtues, the Zone was a limited place.

But then so was Bellamy’s utopia. Just as life on the Zone revolved around maintaining and operating the Canal, so life in Bellamy’s utopia revolves around maintaining and operating his system. One problem with utopias is that once you’re there, there’s no place to go.

For that reason neither the Zone nor Bellamy’s timeless dreamland could fully accommodate American ideals. Like the Zone, Bellamy’s utopia contains no political parties. There were no political campaigns and no campaign promises. And in the tiny regulated world of the Zone, there was no room for the impossible dream.

But one should not overlook the Zone’s considerable virtues. It was a beguiling place—not a twentieth century dream of kaleidoscopic change, consumption, and magic, but a nineteenth century dream of clean-

liness, preservation, and rationality.

And though the Zone was centrally controlled from “The Building,” individual communities had distinct characteristics. Bellamy would have approved of that. His utopia was meant to combine the advantages of diversity and unity.

For instance, in construction days a workman described Ancon as on the way up socially, but insecure compared to Cristobal, “the most ‘Statesy’ of all Canal villages.” Gorgona was unruly but hospitable; Empire, arty; “Pedro Miguelites were given to card-playing”; Paraiso was serious and charitable. Some of these towns disappeared long ago, and the atmosphere of others changed over the years. But any ex-Zonian will have his



“... dedicated to the builders of the Panama Canal...”

own memories of the distinctive atmosphere of his “Canal village.”

Bellamy was one of the first planners who wanted to balance technology and nature. Perhaps in no place did men come closer to doing that than in the Canal Zone, where the Canal was our machine; the Zone, our garden.

*Among the hundreds of nineteenth century utopian experiments in the United States was an effort to found Icaria, led by Cabet himself. At various times there were Icarian settlements near The Red River in Texas; at Cheltenham, Missouri; Nauvoo, Illinois; Canning, Iowa; and Claverdale, California. By 1857 all had failed and the Icarians became Americans.*

On next page:  
Aerial view of Balboa.







*The lights on the Thatcher Ferry Bridge come on as the sun sets over the Canal on the Pacific side of the Isthmus. Below: Ancón Hill is silhouetted and Gargas Hospital is clearly visible in the night photo taken from the Lattery Building in Panama City.*



## *The Canal Zone At Night*

*Like beacons in the night, the lights of the Canal provide the illumination vital to its 24-hour operation. Below: Miraflores and Pedro Miguel Locks stand out in the darkness. At right: A 1915 night photograph of the Administration Building to compare with our cover photograph. Inside the back cover: The Fort Amador Causeway is outlined by the lights of cars and in the Canal a streak of light indicates the movement of a ship.*

